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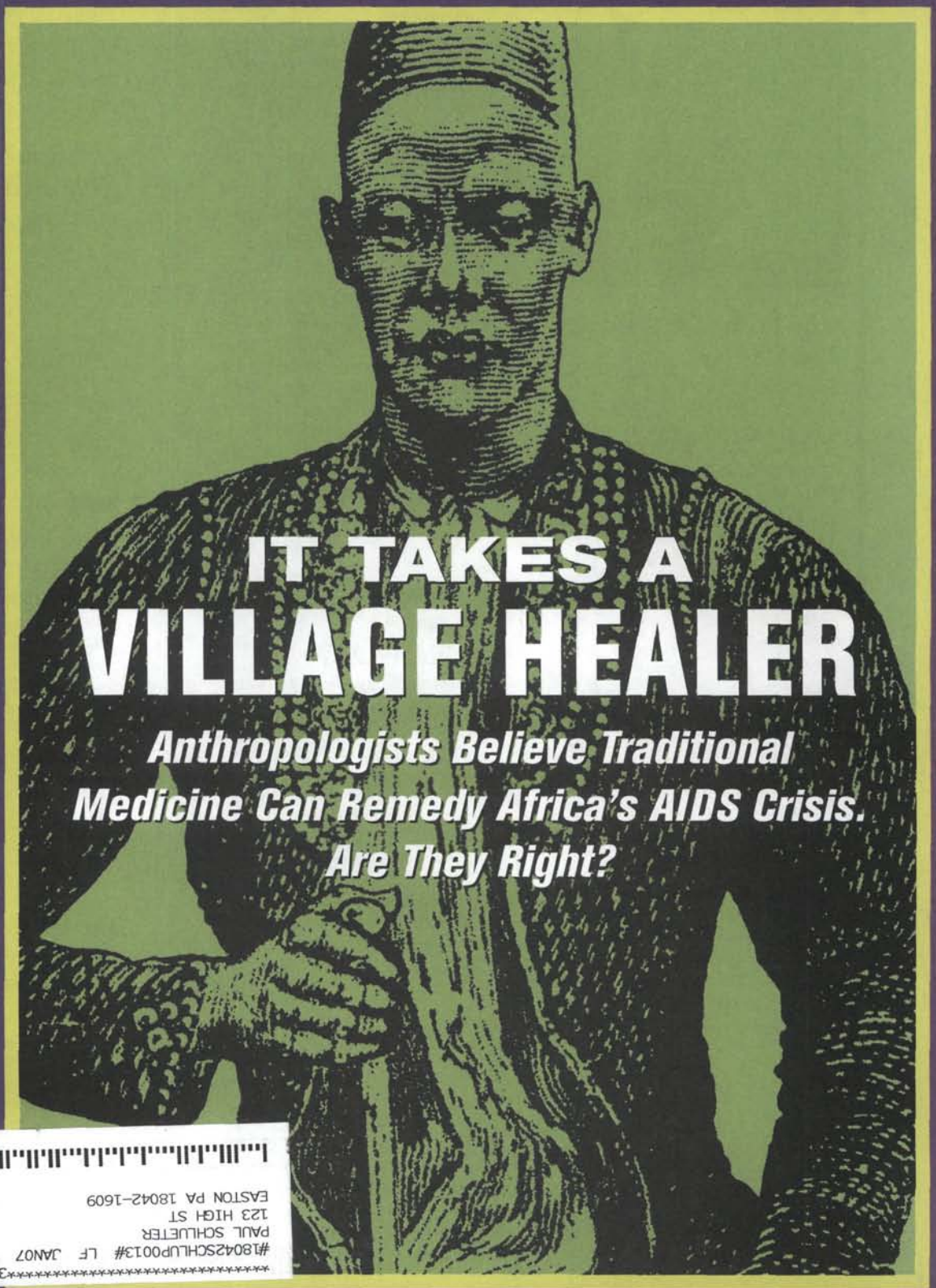

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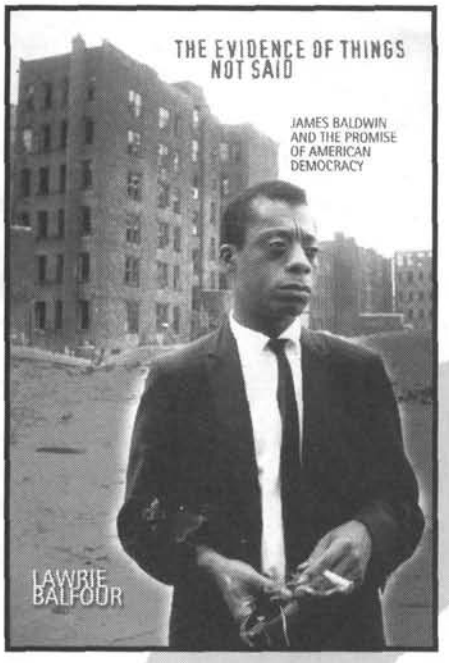

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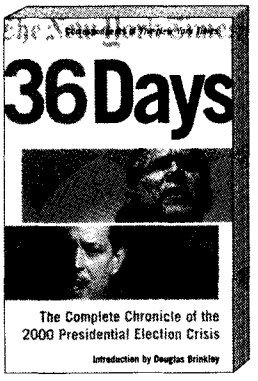

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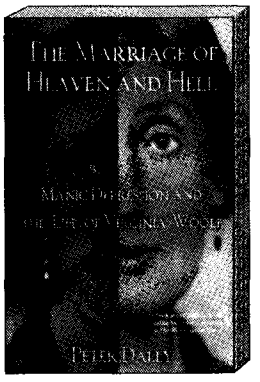

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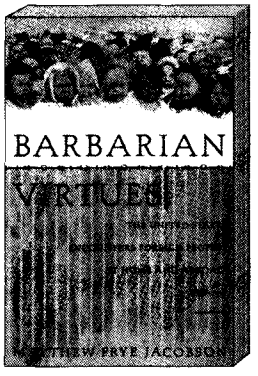

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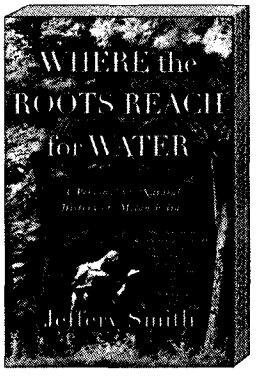

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Table of Contents

FEATURES

28 IT TAKES A VILLAGE HEALER
Medical anthropologists suggest an unlikely remedy for Africa's staggering AIDS crisis. Can herbalists and diviner-mediums succeed where Western doctors have failed?
BY MATTHEW STEINGLASS

40 HURRICANE HUGO
University of Chicago president Hugo Sonnenschein insisted on making the Great Books accountable to the bottom line. Was he a sellout or a savior?
BY DAVID L. KIRP

50 STATUS ANXIETY IN SAN JUAN
Viva las postmodernistas! The newest advocates of Puerto Rican statehood read Foucault and hail from the radical left. Don't talk to them about the purity of island culture.
BY CHRIS MOONEY

61 BOUNCING OFF THE WALLS
Designing a concert hall is no mean feat. But does that make it a science? Acoustics is nothing so exact, say the skeptics.
BY PAUL MITCHINSON

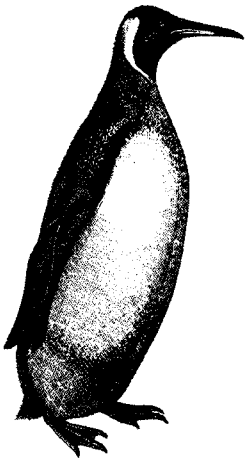

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Fig. *1819, "The Tragi-Comical History of the Lovers of Quimper-Corentin,"* Blackwood's Magazine.
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DEPARTMENTS

5 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

6 FIELD NOTES
Picket line of scrimmage/Credits at Christie's/A Wolfe in Marxist clothing, and more

15 BREAKTHROUGH BOOKS
The history of death

19 INSIDE PUBLISHING
Styron meets Genovese/Joe McCarthy's metaphysics/Toga talk/The postman always brings vice, and more

67 CONFERENCES

68 HYPOTHESES
Jim Holt on the virtues of self-delusion.

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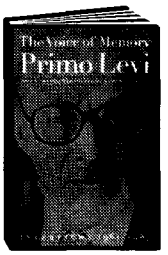

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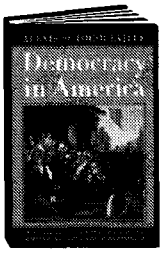

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FOURTH-WAY POLITICS?

Like everything that appears in *Lingua Franca,* Corey Robin's article on John Gray and Edward Luttwak ["The Ex-Cons," February] was well written and objective. But are these former neoconservatives really turning to the left, or are they instead becoming paleo-conservatives without realizing it?

Paleo-conservatives are generally as distrustful of the market as they are of government, and they also tend to be far more "green" than neocons. In fact, part of the fun one gets from reading paleo-conservative publications—such as *Chronicles,* published by the Rockford Institute—is discovering which heroes paleo-conservatives share with the far left: people ranging from William Appleman Williams and Wendell Berry to Gore Vidal and Edward Abbey.

Bill Clinton and Tony Blair have used and abused government power to "turbocharge" capitalism, garnering much applause from people who consider themselves of the left. It is illogical for market-weary conservatives to join the applause. What one sees forming is a new alignment of politics, one of globalizers versus localizers. Gray and Luttwak may not be crossing the aisle—they may be moving farther away from it.

THOMAS F. BERNER
Yonkers, NY

NOVEL IDEA

I found it fascinating that the scholars recommending books on reading [Breakthrough Books, December/January] invariably turned to the work of other scholars. Whatever happened to creative works? Many of the best books on reading are novels: Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler,* Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose,* Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World.* As critics, it is easy for us to privilege the work of our peers, but without authors, where would we be? Our very profession is a tribute to the creative act.

KAY CHUBBUCK
Assistant Professor of English
U.S. Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD

HEALTH ASSURANCE

I am a practicing veterinarian, and I was appalled by the misleading information contained in Stephen Mihm's "Pet Theory" [December/January]. I have spent many hours over the past eight years trying to educate and reassure anguished pregnant women who have been told they need to get rid of their cats because of the risks of toxoplasmosis. By leading readers to the false conclusion that cats are a major health risk, articles like Mihm's cause more distress than illumination.

Let me set the record straight on one of the most glaringly fallacious statements in the article: Although cats are the definitive hosts for *Toxoplasma gondii,* cat feces are *not* the biggest source of toxoplasma infection in the United States. It is extremely difficult for a human to become infected by a pet cat that has been exposed to a carrier rodent. Most infections result from poor hygiene, contaminated environments (sandboxes, garden soil), or the handling or ingestion of undercooked meats. To blame the increase in cat ownership for the increasing incidence of schizophrenia completely ignores these much more common routes of toxoplasma infection in humans.

KATHRYN M. WALKER
Beckley, WV

Stephen Mihm responds: As a cat owner myself, I appreciate Dr. Walker's concern. But it's only fair to note that sandboxes and garden soil are often contaminated *because* cats bury their feces. Having a toxo-positive cat using a litterbox indoors is another form of environmental contamination—one that can be avoided, however, by cleaning the box once a day.

TOBIN CALLING TOBIN

In "French Resistance" [Field Notes, December/January], Jennifer Berkshire aptly describes the movement in France toward a tax on speculative transactions. She might have added that the clearest enunciation of the consequences of the economist James Tobin's ideas appears in *Tobin or Not Tobin,* a 1998 volume by François Chesnais, a prominent member of ATTAC. Among others, José Bové, the French farmer and anti-McDonald's activist, is an avid fan of Chesnais's book. Some of us just like the title.

RONALD W. TOBIN
Professor of French
University of California at Santa Barbara

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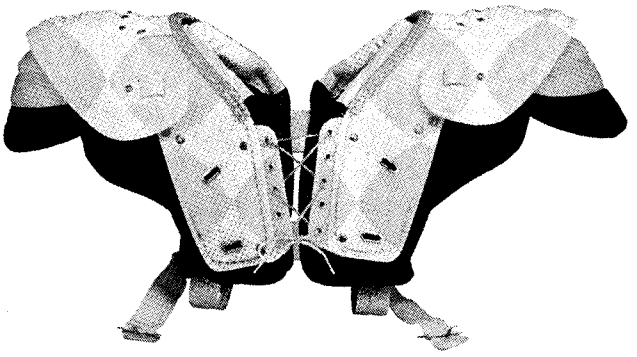

CONTRACT SPORT

DURING A 1995 RADIO INTERview, Donnie Edwards, an honor-roll student at UCLA and the starting middle linebacker for the Bruins, complained that he and his teammates couldn't always afford enough nourishment for their oversize, hard-working bodies. He cited their meager $560 monthly stipends and NCAA rules that restrict student athletes from earning their own money. After the broadcast, a sports agent delivered $150 in groceries to the football player's off-campus apartment. When the NCAA found out, Edwards, who said he didn't ask for the food, received a one-game suspension.

"Look at how much money they make from college football alone, all those TV deals, the shoe deals, the jersey deals," an irate Edwards told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Who's getting it? All the schools. Who's being exploited? Us." He urged college football players across the country to walk off the field in solidarity.

It would be hard to argue that Edwards is being exploited now: He is in the last year of a three-year, thirteen-million-dollar contract with the Kansas City Chiefs. But the vast majority of his college teammates did not become NFL players. Some did not even graduate. At least one former Bruin was disappointed that the players strike never came together: "I expected people to rally around," says Ramogi Huma.

It took more than five years, but this January the athletes finally united. Standing with members of the football team at a press conference, Huma, now a graduate student in public health at UCLA, announced the formation of the Collegiate Athletes Coalition. The CAC seeks larger stipends, an end to limits on earnings during the academic year (now capped at two thousand dollars), better life-insurance policies, employment counseling, and policies that help "student athletes make education their top priority and improve graduation rates." The athletes also want medical insurance to cover summertime weightlifting regimens, which universities are not required to insure, even when strength coaches devise them.

The CAC, which is hoping to establish chapters at other Division I schools, sounds a lot like a nascent union. Indeed, says Huma, "there are a lot of similarities" between the employer-employee relationship and the university–student-athlete relationship, particularly where high-profile sports like football are concerned. "The big misconception is that we have a free ride, but there's definitely work performed," says Huma.

The CAC is not the only student group to press the NCAA on quality-of-life issues. The Student Basketball Council, under the aegis of the National Association of Basketball Coaches, has asked that schools consider expenses like school books, laundry, and holiday trips home when they set stipends and earnings ceilings.

Jane Jankowski, the NCAA's assistant director for

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public relations, counters that such demands reflect the concerns of only a small percentage of the 335,000 student athletes in Divisions I, II, and III. Needy students can avail themselves of Pell grants and a ten-million-dollar emergency fund, Jankowski notes, and the NCAA already includes students on advisory councils at various levels. Huma is unimpressed by these efforts. "I don't know what the NCAA intended," he says, "but if they tried to design a system that would fail, they couldn't have done a better job."

Voices like Huma's join a growing chorus of coaches, faculty members, and sports columnists urging American universities to reexamine an amateur athletics system that in many ways has become big business. Many critics say that Division I men's basketball and football have all but turned into a university-subsidized farm system for the professional leagues. NBA commissioner David Stern acknowledged as much during the most recent All-Star break when he floated the idea of offering loans of up to twenty thousand dollars to professional-caliber college stars to entice them to stay in school.

For the time being, the CAC is stopping short of arguing, as graduate teaching assistants have done, that their constituents are in fact university employees and should be seen that way in the eyes of the law. Huma stresses that the CAC is a "student advocacy group," not a labor union: "We're not considered employees. We're not covered by labor laws. We can't collectively bargain with our employers."

But even if the CAC is not ready to argue that athletes are employees, others will. "These people are professionals," says James L. Shulman, financial and administrative officer of the Mellon Foundation and, with William G. Bowen, author of *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values* (Princeton). Shulman says that the student athletes' complaints are a sensible response to an out-of-control system at odds with the educational mission of universities.

"The whole fig leaf that this is just amateur sports is eroding on a number of fronts," comments Murray Sperber, a professor of English and American studies at Indiana University and the author of *Beer and Circus: How Big-Time College Sports Is Crippling Undergraduate Education* (Holt). "Athletes are basically vocational students. In big programs, they are working thirty, forty, fifty hours a week. Some are try-

Nobody doubts that college athletics are big business. Does that make football players university employees?

DON'T HAVE A SACRED COW, MAN

THOUGH IT INVOKES THE BIBLE ALMOST AS OFTEN AS *The 700 Club*, *The Simpsons* is not exactly what you'd call religious programming. Rescued from a fire, Homer Simpson entreats God, "Oh, spiteful one, show me who to smite and they shall be smoten." When the evangelical Flanders family loses its home to a hurricane, Ned Flanders begs God for an explanation, protesting, "I've done everything the Bible says, even the stuff that contradicts the other stuff!"

Yet according to a recent issue of *The Christian Century*, many people of faith enjoy the show precisely because, in the words of Calvin College professor William Romanowski, it "treats religion as an integral part of American life." A study by the UC-San Bernardino sociologist John Heeren supports this claim: Nearly 70 percent of *Simpsons* episodes contain religious content, and 11 percent have religion as their context.

But before you change your motto to What Would Homer Do?, read "Marge's Moral Motivation," an essay by the Medaille College philosopher Gerald Erion and the self-described "starving philosopher" Joseph Zeccardi in the forthcoming *The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh of Homer* (Open Court). Erion and Zeccardi observe that Marge Simpson, though religious, strongly resists "divine command theory"—the sort of authority-based faith that drives Ned Flanders to pester Reverend Timothy Lovejoy at home with requests for guidance. ("Ned, have you thought about one of the other major religions?" Lovejoy asks. "They're all pretty much the same.")

Whatever its degree of piety, *The Simpsons* has paid God the ultimate cartoon tribute: When depicted, He appears with the full allotment of five fingers per hand—one more than the four digits sported by Springfield's faithful.

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ing to go to school around that, some are not. In either case, you are not getting paid very much." Sperber muses that the student athletes could invoke the same arguments that helped "restricted-salary" assistant coaches, whose yearly earnings had been capped at sixteen thousand dollars, to win a class-action suit in 1998.

"If you're playing football at the University of Illinois, that is your job," adds Cary Nelson, a professor of English at the University of Illinois. An outspoken supporter of efforts to unionize TAs and part time faculty, Nelson sees the CAC as "part of the overall movement to empower contingent or casual labor at the universities." And while he sees certain similarities between the two groups, he says that "the degree to which athletes' education is delayed is greater than for TAs."

If the status of college athletes ever changes significantly, Sperber believes those changes will come from courts. For now the United Steelworkers union is urging the CAC to follow in the footsteps of other campus organizing projects it has advised, like United Students Against Sweatshops. And so the athletes are taking their case to the court of public opinion, as Donnie Edwards did in 1995.

"High-profile college players have a voice," says Steelworkers official Tim Waters. "The media and fans are interested in what players are going to say."

BLAKE ESKIN

STUDENTS IN THE SHOWROOM

IT'S THE BANE OF ART HISTORY departments everywhere: Students spend more time looking at slides than at actual paintings. Ellen Handy, a former Bard professor, oversees an M.A. program that resolves the problem—but not in a way you might expect. "The presumption elsewhere," she explains, "is that students must go to Europe, or you put them on a bus once a year. Instead, we bring students into the Christie's salesroom."

Salesroom? Yes: Christie's New York, the privately owned auction house, has launched a master of arts program, with Handy as the director of studies. The auction house, which recently agreed to pay more than $250 million to settle a class-action lawsuit for price-fixing in collusion with Sotheby's, received accreditation for the program in 1998 from the New York State Board of Regents.

What's next? A Ph.D. from Pfizer? An M.B.A. from Microsoft?

To be fair, course work at Christie's is nothing new. For years, the auction house has offered nondegree courses in art and the business of art. And Sotheby's New York has

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a similar program in American art and antiques that features field trips to private collections and historic homes. But students who take those courses are granted, at most, a certificate.

Christie's management decided to make its scholarly offerings official by securing academic credentials. According to Bruce Altshuler, director of the museum studies program at New York University (and Handy's predecessor at Christie's), "the thinking was that the program was very strong and the students were working very hard—they deserve a degree." To gain accreditation, Christie's added a thesis requirement to its existing course work and created an academic advisory committee of art historians not on staff at Christie's.

The M.A. program consists of a guest-lecture series in art history, as well as seminars taught by in-house faculty on historical research and on topics related to the art market and connoisseurship. Guest lecturers range from New York art dealer David Tunick to Wellesley professor Patricia Berman and NYU professor Robert Rosenblum. Last January featured a lecture on Marcel Duchamp by Philadelphia Museum of Art assistant curator Michael Taylor and an in-house seminar on "condition issues, copies, and fakes." There are also weekly object labs and local field trips to give students hands-on experience. In 1997, before the program was accredited, students used the Sally and Victor Ganz Collection to learn how to price works of art and write catalog entries. (Later that year, Christie's sold the collection, which includes works by Picasso, Jasper Johns, and Frank Stella, for a neat $206.5 million.)

Handy notes that access is not the curriculum's only selling point. She emphasizes the program's theoretical side, which draws on some of the intellectual trends that permeate university art history departments. "Christie's program is not so conservative as one might imagine," she says. "Our students are engaging with philosophical ideas in the classroom along with handling objects in the salesrooms. And even our most unusual courses here may be familiar in universities under other terms. Patronage, for example, is a classic topic in studies of Renaissance art. Only here we're studying the modern patron J.P. Morgan instead of the Medici."

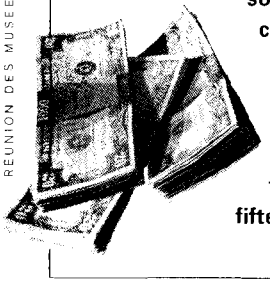
An M.A. from Christie's? Until people learn the details, Altshuler concedes, "there is skepticism."

Christie's students know something about patronage firsthand. Tuition for the fifteen-month program currently runs $26,975, with no financial aid or federal loans currently available. The students, more than 80 percent of whom are female, include a mix of recent college graduates and late-day career changers. Of the fifteen students who graduated with an M.A. in 1999 and 2000, five now work in galleries, including the Marian Goodman and Gagosian galleries in New York. Three landed paid positions in Christie's training program, and another joined the house as a specialist in the Latin American department. So far, it seems none has gone to arch rival Sotheby's.

How will the program rate? Outside of Christie's pool of lecturers, few art historians are aware of it yet. Many who do learn of the program are initially suspicious. "Until people find out the details of curriculum and see who is giving the lectures, there is skepticism," Altshuler concedes. Rosenblum, who lectures at Christie's on artists such as Seurat, Picasso, and Lichtenstein, argues that the program's location keeps quality

ECON ARTISTS

THE U.S. ECONOMY MAY BE A LITTLE SHAKY AT THE MOMENT, but the market for economics professors has rarely been better. According to the February 20 *Wall Street Journal*, "a confluence of events including a scarcity of economics Ph.D.s and a rise in students clamoring to study economics means that even low-level candidates are treated like big shots." In other words, the laws of supply and demand are making life good for entry-level economics professors. A recent University of Arkansas study found that pay for their positions has gone up some 15 percent since 1999; the *Journal* article told of doctorate-wielding youngsters being wooed for assistant professor jobs with salary offers of seventy or eighty thousand dollars and promises of "light teaching loads, early sabbaticals, twenty-thousand-dollar research budgets, and fifteen thousand dollars in summer pay."



RÉUNION DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX / ART RESOURCE, NY

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high: "Being in New York, the program has easy access to some of the best people from academe. Many of my colleagues are eager to give a lecture or two." But he admits that the level of his lectures is aimed rather low. "I teach both graduate and undergraduate courses at NYU, and the talks I give at Christie's are more at the undergraduate survey level."

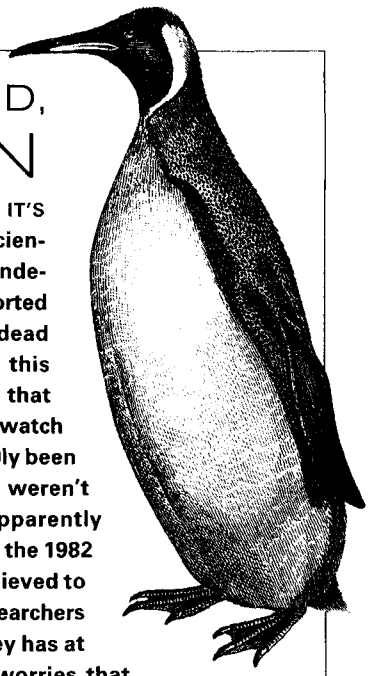
Does Christie's primary function—luring enough bidders to pump up an item's market value—clash with the disinterested study of art history? And might not Christie's exaggerate its own role in the art world as it educates students? Altshuler and Handy both say they have not experienced any conflicts of interest and insist that the graduate program enjoys a healthy autonomy from its parent company.

Still, even Handy admits that education in the shadow of big business can at times seem strange: "We live in a time when universities are becoming more and more like corporations and here is a corporation that has, in part, become a university. It has everything to do with the global economy—and other forces beyond my comprehension."

JORI FINKEL

At Christie's, students study the modern patron J.P. Morgan instead of the Medici.

LOOK SKYWARD, PENGUIN



THE YEAR IS STILL YOUNG, BUT IT'S already been a good one for scientific research. In January, two independent teams of physicists reported that they had slowed light to a dead stop. Then, in February, came this news from the BBC: "The myth that penguins topple over when they watch aircraft flying overhead has finally been laid to rest." To be honest, we weren't aware of this myth—it was apparently invented by British pilots during the 1982 Falklands war—but we were relieved to learn that a group of intrepid researchers from the British Antarctic Survey has at last debunked it. Inspired by worries that aircraft activity was affecting penguins' breeding habits, the team spent five weeks on the Antarctic island of South Georgia studying a thousand king penguins; part of the research involved videotaping the waddling birds as helicopters flew overhead at various altitudes. The results were unambiguous: "Not one king penguin fell over," said Dr. Richard Stone, the team leader.

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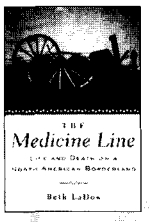

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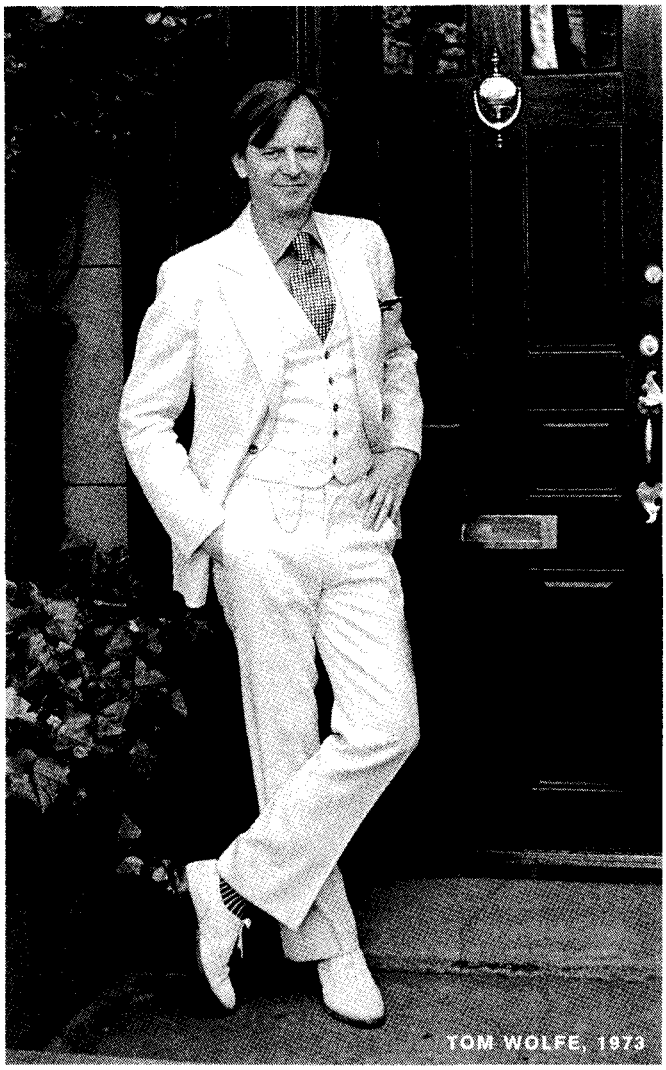
TOM WOLFE, 1973

NANCY CRAMPTON

PERHAPS YOU'RE A FAN OF Tom Wolfe's polemical 1989 *Harper's* essay, "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast," in which he excoriated contemporary American novelists for abandoning realism, neglecting the tradition of Charles Dickens and John Steinbeck, and ignoring the rich texture of what he has called the "irresistibly lurid carnival of American life." Or perhaps you admire his recent screed "My Three Stooges," in which he criticizes John Updike, Norman Mailer, and John Irving—all of whom publicly voiced their strong dislike of Wolfe's 1998 novel, *A Man in Full*—for dispensing with the sort of "intensely realistic novel, based upon reporting," that he purports to write himself.

If you appreciate these spirited denunciations of recent American literature, you ought to be alerted to a potential irony: The aesthetic arguments put forth by Wolfe, a political and cultural conservative, are very similar to views espoused in the 1930s by writers affiliated with the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), such as the John Reed Clubs and the League of American Writers (LAW). Consider: Just as members of the John Reed Clubs denounced Proust's and Joyce's high-modernist aestheticism as counterrevolutionary, Wolfe condemns post-1960 American writing as idle navel-gazing, describing its works as "variants of French aestheticism, products of the notion that the only pure art is art not about life but about art itself." Furthermore, the American writer that Wolfe misses most is none other than the distinguished fellow traveler John Steinbeck. Could Tom Wolfe—*Tom Wolfe!*—he of the throbbing, amped-up, stereophonic puncturings of liberal pieties—could the Dapper One himself have been penning editorials for *New Masses* seventy years ago?

The smoking gun may be Wolfe's 1956 dissertation, "The League of American Writers: Communist Organizational Activity Among American Writers, 1929–1942," written for Yale's American studies program. The dissertation, which takes a sweeping view of literary politics in the 1930s, is a very different animal from his recent literary diatribes—a very different animal, indeed, from anything else of Wolfe's you've ever read. In clear, dry prose (nary an exclamation point in sight), Wolfe draws on the tools of the sociologist Max Weber to examine the Depression-era literary left as an organizational phenomenon.

In 1929, when the Comintern in Moscow instructed the CPUSA to begin organizing American writers, the CPUSA faced a serious challenge: How could the sergeant majors of Marxism-Leninism turn a ragged band of bohemian writers into, in Wolfe's terms, a "rational writer-bureaucracy" in the service of international revolution? Many early efforts were extraordinarily clumsy. The John Reed Clubs were plagued by esoteric quarrels over the efficacy of various "proletarian novels." And they were slow to realize that "prestigeful" (a favorite Wolfe usage, then and now) writers ought to be used for their moral stature—as when James T. Farrell walked picket lines in Union Square or Ernest Hemingway traveled to Spain to support the Loyalists—rather than asked simply to churn out propaganda.

Tom Wolfe's dissertation may offer the secret key to his later work.

By 1935, though, American communists had come to favor savvier alliances with broader coalitions of liberals and leftists. That spring, the CPUSA replaced the John Reed Clubs with the more inclusive LAW. At its peak, the LAW had approximately eight hundred members, including some of the country's most respected writers: Steinbeck, Nelson Algren, John Dos Passos, Richard Wright, Dashiell Hammett, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and the expatriate Thomas Mann. The party functionaries who semicovertly directed the LAW were skilled at organizing evening cocktail parties—which Wolfe, in his best sociologist's voice, calls "the core-conventional medium of interpersonal communication" for writers. At

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these events, the party could raise funds, organize, and subtly set ideological boundaries. ("The Communist organizers in charge," Wolfe writes, "were always careful to see to it that liquor was, indeed, ample.")

Students of Wolfe's sartorial panache and theatrical sensibility will be especially fascinated by the dissertation's first chapter, in which he sketches a sociological profile of the American writing profession. He describes the "ritually significant" patterns of debauchery in New York writers parties of the 1920s: "This acting-out process was of prime importance in maintaining the discreteness of the literary style of life." (The same note of anthropological detachment would resurface fourteen years later in his famous essay "Radical Chic.") And when he describes the cocktail party as the "focal point of [writers'] aspirations for interpersonal deference," it's hard not to think of the acute attention to the literary pecking order that Wolfe demonstrates in his recent spat with Updike, Mailer, and Irving.

If the CPUSA had never existed, Wolfe concedes, the Depression alone would have pushed American writers toward the left. But only concerted efforts at organization, he argues, produced such resolute literary activism as the writers committees in solidarity with the Scottsboro Boys, Loyalist Spain, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. How's that for plunging "wholeheartedly into the social reality of America"—to cite again Wolfe's literary ideal?

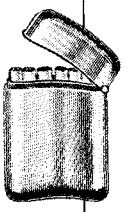
Wolfe, though, does not seem inclined to revisit his past with an eye for such continuities. "The subject of [my] dissertation," he once told an interviewer, "was only incidentally politics and literature. In my hands, writers such as E. Hemingway and J. Dos Passos came across like remote figures from Sumerian history. My approach was entirely sociological.... My dissertation...was supremely—to the point of terminally—boring to read." Or so he would have us believe.

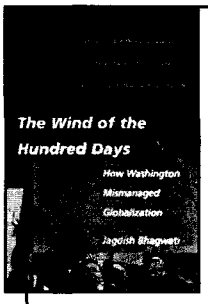
DAVID GLENN

A version of this story appeared as a Dissertations Deconstructed column on Contentville.com.

THANK YOU FOR SMOKING

TALK ABOUT UNWANTED ATTENTION. THE UNIVERSITY OF Nottingham has received an "intellectual bravery award" from Forest, Britain's largest pro-smoking group. The reason for the accolade? The school's acceptance of a £3.8 million endowment from a major tobacco company. According to the BBC, the embarrassed university has called the bravery award "irrelevant and inappropriate" but sees no need to apologize for taking money from British American Tobacco, the company that makes Rothmans, Dunhill, Lucky Strike, and other brands. Still, the school may regret having gone down Tobacco Road: The award has fired up Britain's antismoking groups, and the Cancer Research Campaign has announced that it will stop raising money for the school's new research laboratory.





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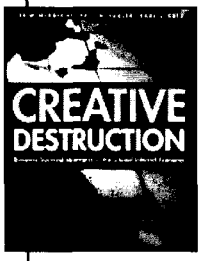

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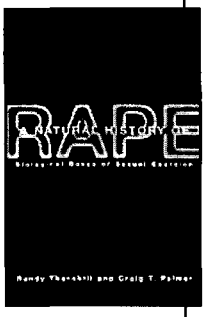

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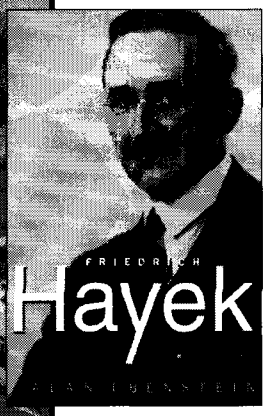

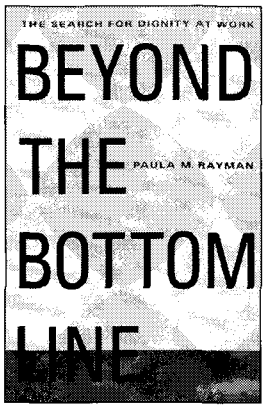

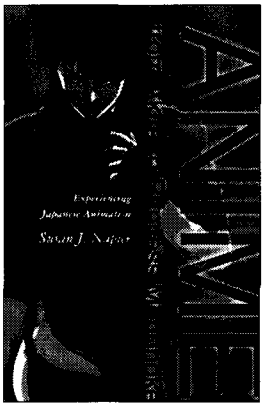

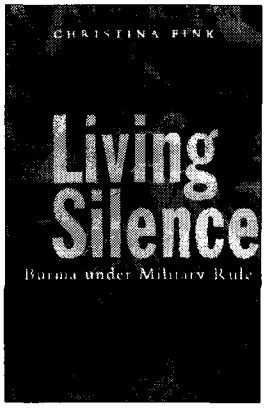

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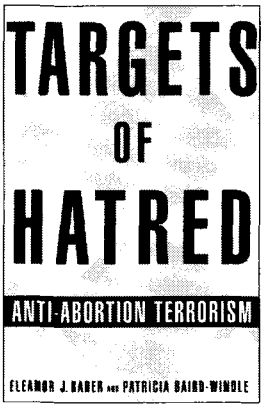

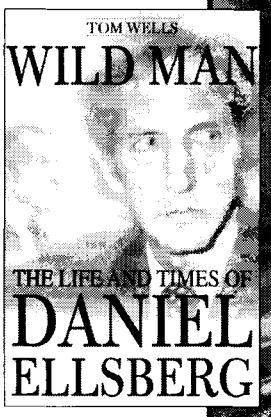

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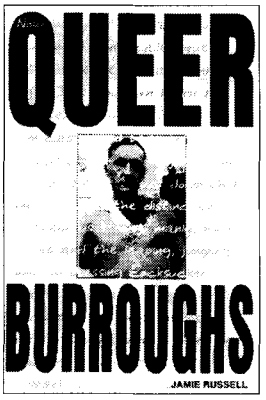

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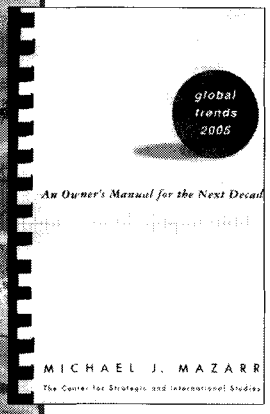

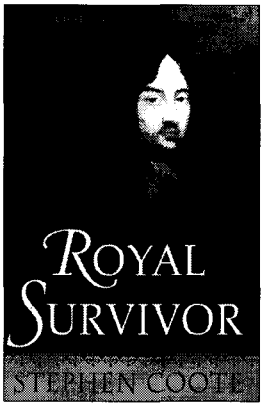

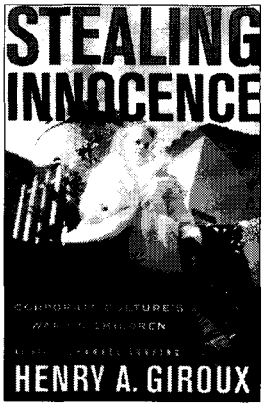

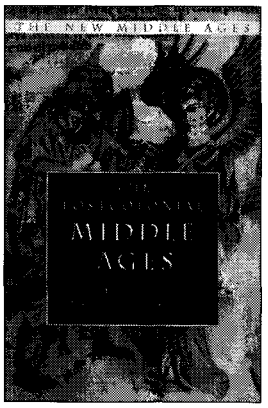

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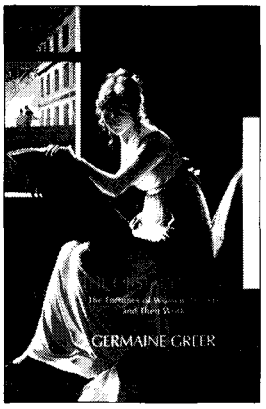

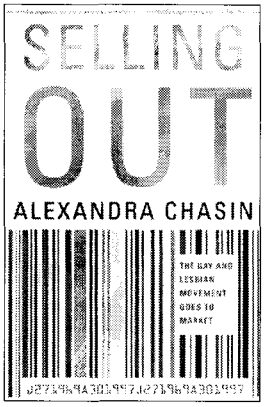

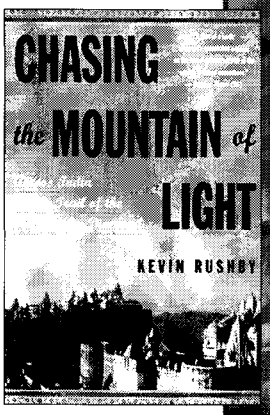

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Breakthrough Books

DEATH

WE ASKED FOUR SCHOLARS TO RECOMMEND THE BEST RECENT BOOKS ON MORTALITY.

Gary Laderman, associate professor of religion at Emory University and author of *Death in Modern America: A Cultural History of the Funeral Industry in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, forthcoming).

"Scholarship on the history of death in the United States is expanding rapidly, showing signs of interdisciplinary vitality and methodological innovation. In her slim but substantive historical monograph, ***Obituaries in American Culture*** (Mississippi, 2000), **Janice Hume** charts larger trends in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America through a study of newspaper death notices. Anchoring her survey to major junctures in American history—Andrew Jackson's presidency, the Civil War, the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment—Hume moves from careful examinations of individual testimonials to more general discussions of dominant cultural values relating to social divisions between classes, races, regions, and the sexes. Public memory simultaneously distorts and illuminates, she points out: The idealism of the individual obituary must be set against the fact that most deaths receive no public acknowledgment. By the end of her investigation, Hume, like many others who study this history, has underscored an unavoidable anthropological fact about America, one that explains the field's vigor: Ours is a nation preoccupied with death."

Christine Quigley, author of *Death Dictionary* (McFarland, 1994), *The Corpse: A History* (McFarland, 1996), and *Modern Mummies: The Preservation of the Human Body in the Twentieth Century* (McFarland, 1998).

"What better guide to the corporeal aspects of death and its aftermath than the observations of a poetic pathologist? In ***The Day of the Dead and Other Mortal Reflections*** (Harcourt Brace, 1993), the pathologist **Frank Gonzalez-Crussi** speaks eloquently about the language, abstraction, and personification of death from a dissecting-table perspective. His work is more than reportage and reminiscences, although those elements—spiced with literary allusions—enhance his discussions of embalming, autopsy, human sacrifice, skeletons, death masks, holy relics, and scientific specimens. The author visits an embalmer who has been practicing for more than sixty years, and he returns to his native Mexico to participate in the Día de los Muertos celebrations. In ***Suspended Animation: Six Essays on the Preservation of Bodily Parts*** (Harcourt Brace, 1995), we travel through time with Gonzalez-Crussi and the photographer Rosamond Purcell as our guides. Gonzalez-Crussi shows us Renaissance Bologna's anatomy theater and introduces us to the seventeenth-century Dutch embalmer Fredrik Ruysch and the sixteenth-century Belgian anatomist Andreas Vesalius. Purcell's photographs convey the quiet dignity of the hydrocephalic, the conjoined; her work captures the unexpected beauty of a fetus floating in formalin and a skull crowned with lifeless flowers. Gonzalez-Crussi explains that the meticulous sculpting of anatomic models of the body and its components in wax was an alternative to preserving parts in fixatives. 'Wax modeling was the first successful effort we undertook to distance ourselves from the dead,' he writes. 'Since then, we have not ceased in our efforts to deepen the gulf.'"

Stephen Prothero, associate professor of religion at Boston University and author of *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America* (California, 2001).

"**Jessica Mitford** may be dead, but her muckraking classic, ***The American Way of Death,*** lives on in revised form as ***The Amer-***

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ican Way of Death Revisited (Knopf, 1998). Discussing death and dying is no longer taboo, so this book doesn't shock as much today as it did when it first appeared in 1963 and educated her gentle readers about the uglier aspects of embalming fluid, among other things. But the book remains a great read. Like an acupuncturist gone bad, Mitford pokes funeral directors and prods death-care conglomerates, insisting that the funerals they peddle are both overpriced and overwrought. But not all funeral directors are crying uncle. In ***The Undertaking: Life Studies From the Dismal Trade*** (Norton, 1997), **Thomas Lynch** fights back in twelve elegant essays. He doesn't take on Mitford's consumerist complaints; in fact, he deadpans that 'we buy these caskets for less than we sell them for.' Still, his dual existence as a funeral director in Milford, Michigan, and a poet and essayist of astonishing range gives the lie to Mitford's stereotype of the undertaker as an uncouth crook. Mitford's book is a blaring trumpet blast of a complaint that returns again and again to a few favorite notes; Lynch's stories about life and death in a small Midwestern town play all along the scale of human experience. Unlike Mitford, who is only truly comfortable with comedy and outrage, Lynch is at home with both the nostalgic and the ironic, the elegiac and the absurd."

Melvin Urofsky, professor of history at Virginia Commonwealth University and author of *Lethal Judgments: Assisted Suicide and American Law* (Kansas, 2000).

"Some of the great unresolved legal and cultural debates of the past decade revolve around the choices society is willing to allow people at the end of their lives. I explore these issues—living wills, physician-assisted suicide, the refusal of unwanted medical attention—in the classes I teach, and my job has been made easier by **Peter Filene's *In the Arms of Others: A Cultural History of the Right-to-Die in America*** (Ivan R. Dee, 1998). Filene focuses on the influential legal case involving Karen Ann Quinlan, whose parents in 1976 won the right to disconnect her from life support. *Quinlan's* seemingly radical doctrine was later validated by the nation's highest court. But though the legal doctrine governing the right-to-die was established in the 1970s, Filene writes, the nation had been focused on end-of-life issues for a decade or two before that: The late 1950s and the 1960s saw a proliferation of books and magazine and newspaper articles about death, a topic that previously had been somewhat taboo. The book frequently returns to the Quinlans, using the suffering of a single family to anchor what might otherwise be abstract arguments. Filene does not hide his own emotions and views. While he does not proselytize, he is clearly very involved in this subject, not just as a scholar but as a person. This transmutes what might otherwise have been a dry academic study into a powerful examination of an issue that will affect all of us: how much control we have over our last days."

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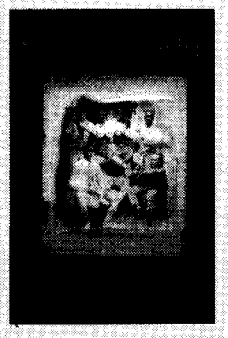

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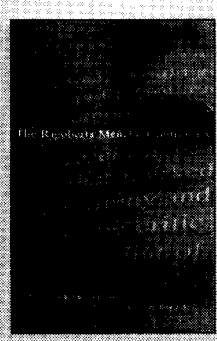

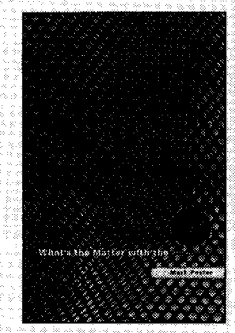

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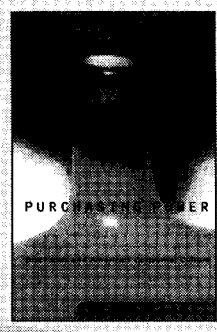

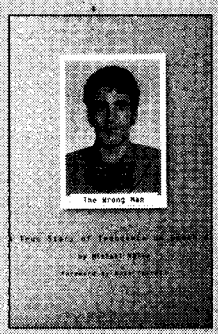

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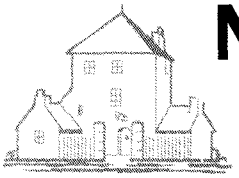

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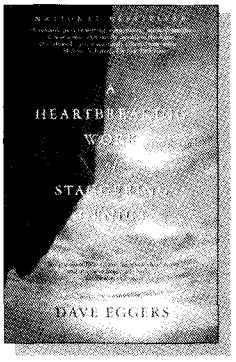

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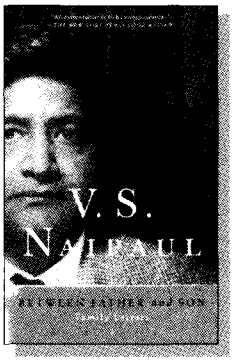

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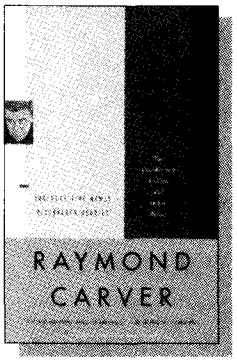

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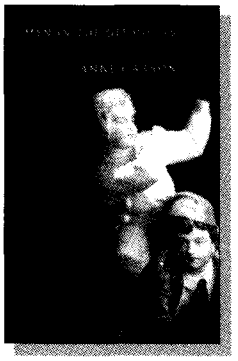

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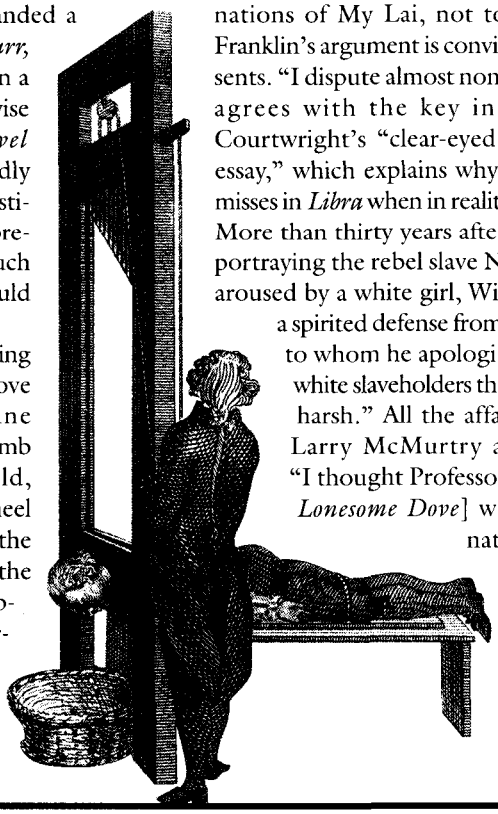
INVITATION TO A BEHEADING

THE PARENTHETICAL IN THE TITLE OF MARK C. Carnes's new anthology, *Novel History: Historians and Novelists Confront America's Past (and Each Other)*, is misleading. In theory, the book's unusual structure could have encouraged intellectual conflict: In each chapter, a historian tackles a historical novel, and the novelist has a chance to reply. And there are moments of scrappiness. But mostly the historians worship the novelists, and the novelists accept the worship, graciously.

Of course, some novelists are more gracious than others. At her own peril does a historian hint that Gore Vidal might have less than utter mastery of the code duello in early America. No one knows what Alexander Hamilton said to upset Aaron Burr so badly that Burr demanded a duel, but Vidal, in his novel *Burr*, imagined that it must have been a charge of incest. In an otherwise complimentary essay in *Novel History*, Joanne Freeman mildly suggests that Vidal has underestimated how sensitive and eristic pre-Jacksonian gentlemen were. Much pettier slanders, she asserts, could lead to murderous fights.

If Vidal himself were a Founding Father, his response would prove her correct. "Now Joanne Freeman," he writes. "You will climb these six steps to the scaffold, holding in your hand a scarf. Kneel at the top. Place your neck on the block and, when ready, drop the scarf and...But I am not in decapitating mood." In a phone interview, Freeman, an assistant professor of history at Yale, says she appreciates the reprieve. "As I started reading his response, I thought, Uh-oh, he's marching me up the steps. I'm about to die. I was very pleased that he spared me from death."



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But, alas, if even Gore Vidal hesitates to let the blade drop—Freeman is "a good writer," he explains, to justify clemency—there's no prospect of any more bloodshed than a styptic pencil could take care of. Indeed, *Novel History* risks being a love-in.

"I am indebted to Professor Kammen for his thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of *World's End*," writes T. Coraghessan Boyle. Tim O'Brien politely ratifies H. Bruce Franklin's thesis about *In the Lake of the Woods*—namely, that most of the explanations it offers for a woman's disappearance are, like the American military's explanations of My Lai, not to be believed. "Mr. Franklin's argument is convincing," O'Brien consents. "I dispute almost none of it." Don DeLillo agrees with the key insight of David T. Courtwright's "clear-eyed and knowledgeable essay," which explains why Oswald's third shot misses in *Libra* when in reality it (probably) didn't. More than thirty years after he was pilloried for portraying the rebel slave Nat Turner as sexually aroused by a white girl, William Styron receives a spirited defense from Eugene Genovese—to whom he apologizes for a depiction of white slaveholders that was "unwarrantably harsh." All the affable treatment leaves Larry McMurtry at a loss for words: "I thought Professor West's piece [about *Lonesome Dove*] was smart and good-natured, but what else to say?" Never at a loss for words, John Updike is so charmed by "Paul Boyer's lively, friendly appraisal of *Memories of the Ford*

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William Styron apologizes to Eugene Genovese for his "unwarrantably harsh" depiction of white slaveholders.

Administration" that he volunteers a catalog of anachronisms that Boyer failed to chew him out for. Do Chip and Dale, the always courteous Disney chipmunks, hold the fate of the historical novel in their paws?

"There's a complementarity [between] the historical novelist's and the historian's enterprise," explains Carnes, a professor of history at Barnard College. By contrast, Carnes's 1995 anthology, *Past Imperfect*, pitted historians against filmmakers. "We were never on the same wavelength," Carnes says, and so for his sequel he turned from film to historical fiction. The resulting amicability doesn't surprise him: "We didn't choose novelists whose evocation of the past was hilarious or farcical or poor."

But novelists should be warned: The historians are probably being nice only because the novelists have something they want. John Demos, for example, is frank about the envy mixed with his admiration of Wallace Stegner. His initial reaction to *Angle of Repose* was almost painful, he confesses, because he recognized it as "a deeper, more powerful evocation of 'family history' than anything done by scholars." Years later, in *The Unredeemed Captive*, Demos would write a history with novelistic texture, and his ambition has been shared by a number of social historians. John Lukacs even speculates that the historical novel, and the more recent "nonfiction novels" of Truman Capote and Norman Mailer, have merely been flawed, discardable instars of history's ongoing metamorphosis. "It is indeed possible," Lukacs writes, "that in the future the novel may be entirely absorbed by history."

CALEB CRAIN

THE PARANOID STYLE IN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

MANY PEOPLE REGRET THAT THEY NEVER HAD a chance to debate W.V.O. Quine, who died last Christmas at the age of ninety-two. But surely John McCumber is the only one who wishes he could have grilled the famous American philosopher about McCarthyism, which he believes jumpstarted Quine's career: "I would have asked him, How did you manage to win all those battles in the Harvard philosophy department?" After all, McCumber explains, "Quine was an embattled figure for a while, and then sometime after World War II suddenly he won all the battles. I'm not saying that there was necessarily anything nefarious about it. But he was saying the things that the times demanded, and it was not for philosophical reasons that they demanded it."

McCumber, a professor of German at Northwestern University, suspects that American philosophy is harboring a dark secret about its past. In his new book, *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the McCarthy Era* (Northwestern), he argues that American philosophy, having borne the brunt of the anticommunist purges of the academy in the 1950s, "largely remains, even today, what Joe McCarthy's academic henchmen would have wanted it to be." Specifically, he suspects that the pressures of McCarthyism helped to turn American philosophers away from broad social and cultural reflection and toward analytic philosophy—the highly technical and specialized discipline concerned with logic, language, and the exact sciences.

Analytic philosophers are often criticized today for producing apolitical, detached, and naively "objective" work. But McCumber contends that these very qualities safeguarded them during the 1950s. Philosophers like Quine, he feels, were fortunate that their rigorous, scientific approach did not raise suspicion among "right-wing vigilantes." Thinkers of a different bent were not so lucky: Only by "adopting the mantle of science," he writes, could they "find their way through the paranoid jumble of McCarthyism." Some aspects of analytic philosophy, McCumber adds, even served to maintain the status quo—as when C.L. Stevenson encouraged fellow philosophers not to "take ethical stands" but merely to reflect "on the meaning of ethical terms." The result was the "undeserved dominance" of analytic philosophy and the marginalization of those philosophers, often influenced by Hegel and Heidegger, who work in the so-called Continental tradition.

"There are some possible scandals out there," McCumber says ominously, though he declines to divulge the names of philosophers who might testify to the effect that hostile political conditions had on their discipline. "There are some people who have been sitting around for fifty years hoping somebody would figure this out. For one reason or another, they couldn't raise the issue themselves."

The evidence for McCumber's charges is not, by his own admission, "definitive." Still, he emphasizes the difficult conditions under which philosophers in the 1950s worked. Drawing on

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the historian Ellen Schrecker's book, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (1986), he notes that philosophers attracted "more than their share of anti-intellectual wrath." Indeed, in his tabulation, statistics from Schrecker and the *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors* seem to indicate that philosophy had the largest proportion of professors who were either targets of investigations or hostile witnesses at government hearings. In 1950, for instance, Communist Party member Herbert Phillips was fired from the University of Washington philosophy department after the university's president, Raymond B. Allen, charged him and other party-affiliated professors with being "derelict in their duty to find and teach the truth." (Thus it is hardly surprising, McCumber reasons, that analytic philosophy was able to provide a safe haven, given its stated commitment to "timeless truths.")

McCumber has been mulling this thesis over since the late 1970s. Fearful of the repercussions of expounding his views, "I waited until I had tenure," he explains, "and then I did much of the research, and these numbers came leaping out." His own "weird interactions" with the American Philosophical Association (APA) further fueled his suspicions, as he failed repeatedly over eight years to convince APA authorities to publish his conjectures in its *Proceedings & Addresses*. McCumber finds it "depressing and dispiriting" that no one else has pursued this topic. "I think it's quite shocking," he says, "that I should have to be the one to figure it out."

Not everyone agrees with McCumber's argument. The University of Chicago philosopher Ted Cohen has read *Time in the Ditch* and researched some of its claims in preparation for a discussion to be held by the Pacific Division of the APA on March 31. He thinks the book is "unconvincing." Though he has no doubt that the McCarthy era was a forbidding one for many philosophers, he finds McCumber's claim that McCarthyism accounts for the style of philosophy that prevailed to be "an extremely tenuous proposition, given virtually no evidence."

For those put off by the speculative aspect of McCumber's book, there is at least one other philosopher thinking hard about the political origins of the analytic-Continental divide—and how to overcome it. Michael L. Friedman of Indiana University has recently published *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger* (Open Court), a gracefully executed study of the way in which the analytic and Continental traditions arose out of philosophical debates in Germany in the late 1920s and early 1930s. "I find it very plausible that the McCarthy period had a hardening effect on the analytic-Continental split," Friedman says of McCumber's claim. "But to me, it would be the intensification of something that started earlier."

Before the 1930s, Friedman notes, philosophers like Heidegger and Rudolf Carnap (a teacher of Quine's) read and debated each other's work attentively and respectfully. But the political contingencies of history, he argues, soon had a destructive effect on this collegial and collaborative atmosphere. Carnap associated his logical-scientific approach to philosophy with the *neue Sachlichkeit*, or new objectivity, an anti-individualistic, internationalist worldview inspired by Russian communism and American technology. Notoriously, Heidegger felt that his own philosophical thought—which did not give pride of place to logic and science—was compatible with his anti-American, antitechnology, fascist sympathies. By 1933, Carnap and others had fled Germany for America, while Heidegger had stayed behind. The associations that these thinkers drew between philosophy and politics were by no means necessary, Friedman argues, though in the social and cultural context of the day they were not arbitrary, either: "Today, you can be a Heideggerian without being a Nazi. But in 1933, to be a Heideggerian was, in some sense, to be a Nazi."

For Friedman, the most philosophically unfortunate of all these historical contingencies was the death in 1945 of the German philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who also ended up in America. Unlike Carnap, Cassirer did not believe that philosophy was a branch of science. But neither did he subscribe to Heidegger's strong antiscientific historical outlook. Instead, by crafting a historical-minded account of objectivity in both science and the rest of human inquiry (ethics, aesthetics, religion, and so on), he had affinities with both of today's main philosophical traditions. Friedman urges philosophers to reconsider Cassirer, who did not live long enough to influence the development of American philosophy. "He always remained this half-and-half thing," explains Friedman. "He wasn't Continental, and he wasn't analytic. He just died."

JAMES RYERSON

McCumber suspects that American philosophy is harboring a dark secret about its past.

JOHN McCUMBER (LEFT) AND JOSEPH McCARTHY

MCCUMBER: NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY; MCCARTHY: BETTMAN/CORBIS

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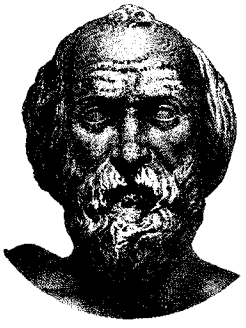
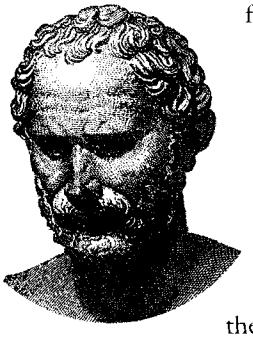
TRASH-TALKERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

AS WITH MANY THINGS ANCIENT AND GREEK, the art of classical oratory calls to mind something wise, dignified, and bearded: prominent Athenians delivering solemn speeches on important occasions. One might think, for example, of Pericles' famous funeral oration in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War.*

Yet there were other, far less orderly opportunities for mass speechmaking in Athens: a raucous legislative assembly open to all qualified male citizens; and a system of open-air courts, where amateur litigants clashed before a boisterous audience of jurors and spectators. Plato found such places so unruly that he likened them to an army camp. If a citizen's oratory fell flat in the legislative assembly, his peers would shout him down. If a litigant's powers of persuasion failed to sway a jury, he ran the risk not only of verbal abuse but of an adverse verdict, which could mean a heavy fine, partial or full loss of civic rights, or death.





LYCURGUS (ABOVE) AND DEMOSTHENES

As a result of these and other pressures (including a limited time period, gauged by a water clock, for speaking in the courts), many of the 150 surviving Greek speeches are less refined and composed than one might expect. Athenian forensic oratory offers us its share of fuzzy one-sided narratives, strained arguments, dodgy accounts of Athenian history, tendentious attacks on opponents, flattery of jurors, and tear-choked appeals to jurors' sense of justice and mercy. In the words of the Yale University classics professor Victor Bers, ancient Greek oratory had all "the drama, sometimes resembling soap opera, of men fighting for their wealth, reputation, and even their lives."

Sadly, few people today are familiar with this rough-and-tumble aspect of Greek oratory. So three years ago, to satisfy the demand for more readable versions of these works, the University of Texas Press launched The Oratory of Classical Greece, a series of affordable and lively English translations of all the surviving intact Athenian speeches (as well as many fragmentary ones) from the late fifth and the fourth century B.C. The series is set to run to at least a dozen volumes, each with a short introduction and commentary; four are on the shelves so far, with the rest to appear within a few years.

Sadly, few people today are familiar with the rough-and-tumble nature of Greek oratory.

The story of classical oratory begins around 430 B.C., when an Athenian named Antiphon got the idea of ghostwriting speeches for litigants to use in court. A new profession, that of the "logographer," was born. Antiphon was counted in antiquity as the first professional in this line of work. But at the most crucial moment, his gifts failed him: He was put to death after defending himself unsuccessfully on a charge of treason against the democracy. After that, the ancients considered Andocides, Lysias, Isocrates, and the shifty Isaeus as the most worthy of his successors. Later distinguished orators included the politicians Aeschines, Demosthenes, Lycurgus, and Hyperides and the logographer Dinarchus. One critic from the late first century B.C. singled out Lysias for his graceful persuasiveness, Isocrates for his thorough mastery of rhetorical technique, and Demosthenes for his vigor, vehemence, and feeling. As for Isaeus: "He turns his opponent into a villain, outflanks the jurors, and tries by every means to help his client's case."

According to series editor Michael Gagarin, a professor of classics at the University of Texas at Austin, the goals of the Texas oratory project were not only to preserve the rhetorical flair and passion of the originals but to bring them up to date. Gagarin notes that the translations in Harvard's venerable Loeb Classical Library—a comprehensive set of editions with facing Greek and English texts—can come off a little stale. (Indeed a few sections, once considered obscene, are translated only into French or Latin.) "Some of the translations, which are fifty to seventy-five years old now, are inaccurate and unsuited to today's undergraduates," he says. Victor Bers, one of the fifteen British and North American classicists selected to work on the Texas project, puts the point more forcefully: "The vocabulary of the Loeb Library orators is often needlessly Latinate or archaic. How many of our undergraduates immediately understand 'blackguard,' to say nothing of knowing how to pronounce the word? The overall impression you can get is of staid lawyers in Edwardian courts going through a tedious blah-blah-blah, not of a high verbal art, much of it meant for performance before huge and rowdy audiences."

Is this so? Consider the following two versions of a passage from Aeschines's "Against Timarchus," in which Aeschines contests Timarchus's right to speak in the Athenian assembly on the grounds that Timarchus is a male prostitute. In the 1919 Loeb translation,

LYCURGUS: STOCK MONTAGE; DEMOSTHENES: NORTH WIND PICTURE ARCHIVES

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Aeschines claims that "this man not long ago, yes, only the other day, in an assembly of the people threw off his cloak and leaped about like a gymnast, half naked, his body so reduced and befouled through drunkenness and lewdness that right-minded men, at least, covered their eyes, being ashamed for the city, that we should let such men as he be our advisers." Here's the same section from the new Texas translation: "[T]his man here, not some time ago but just the other day, threw off his robe and cavorted like a pancratiast in the Assembly, stripped, in such a vile and shameful physical condition on account of drunkenness and other abuses that decent men covered their faces out of shame for the city, that we take advice from people like this." The Texas version is somewhat snappier, while in places keeping closer to the original. For instance, the Loeb translation describes Timarchus cavorting like a "gymnast," which is too restrained an image to suit the original Greek. The Texas translation rightly compares him to a "pancratiast"—an unholy combination of boxer and wrestler not unlike Stone Cold Steve Austin of the World Wrestling Federation.

To be fair, not all the Loeb orator translations are especially stuffy. (And some of the Texas translations, though technically accurate, come off as fairly pedestrian.) In addition, the Loeb Library is very much an ongoing project, constantly bringing new texts to publication and targeting old installments for revision. Still, the Loeb's back catalog of Greek and Latin oratory and rhetorical writings has been gathering dust for some time, and the Texas project is helpfully shaking things up. Who knows? If the series gets the exposure it deserves, even Stone Cold Steve Austin will know what "pancratiast" means.

T. COREY BRENNAN

LADY AND THE STAMP

"BURN THIS LETTER!" THE ADMONITION repeats like a mantra in the correspondence of Isabelle de Charrière (1740–1805) and David-Louis Constant d'Hermenches. At the outset, secrecy was of the essence: Charrière, a future novelist, was then the marriageable daughter of a Dutch noble family, and d'Hermenches, an older Swiss officer, had a rakish reputation as something of a womanizer. Thankfully, neither party obeyed the directive to destroy, leaving us with 267 letters written between 1760 and 1776. In *There Are No Letters Like Yours: The Correspondence of Isabelle de Charrière and Constant d'Hermenches* (Nebraska), Janet and Malcolm Whatley translate the letters into English for the first time.

Although desire propels each missive between Isabelle and d'Hermenches, their affair begins and ends in the realm of the epistolary. In fact, Charrière (who was then known as Belle de Zuylen) met d'Hermenches only a handful of times, and the two never consummated their passion. According to the Whatleys, chastity was an unspoken ground rule that allowed the correspondence to thrive. "The deal is he's not going to put moves on her," explains Malcolm, a retired physicist. Janet, a professor of French at the University of Vermont, notes that this arrangement fell within the guidelines governing the sex lives of eighteenth-century noblemen: "If you were going to seduce someone, you'd seduce a married woman or a woman of a lower class." Janet adds that, following these rules, the virginal Isabelle would actually "be more available after she was married."

Charrière, best known for her epistolary novels, was a prolific writer who experimented with almost every genre. As the author of nine opera librettos, she will be featured in the forthcoming *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (California), by Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson. Neither Charrière's poems nor her introductory essays for editions of Rousseau's *Confessions* have been translated into English, but her novels, including *Letters of Mistress Henley* (1784), *Letters From Lausanne* (1785), and *Letters From Lausanne—Caliste* (1787), are becoming standard fare in French literature classes.

Unresolved endings, at sharp variance with the literary conventions of the day, are a signature of Charrière's novels, and the same ambivalence marks her letters to d'Hermenches. The very questions of whether and how the correspondence should continue become a recurring theme. In an early letter, Isabelle justifies the secret liaison: "After all, why should I constrain myself, and refuse you something that is essentially innocent, that you've seemed ardently to desire?" It is not long, though, before she renounces the platonic affair, saying, "I would have to be very blind or very coquettish to consent to this proposal of frequent letters and intimate liaison"—although, she admits, "it vexes me...to have to give up the most charming letters in the world." As late as 1767, Charrière

DAVID-LOUIS CONSTANT D'HERMENCHES

"I would have to be very blind or very coquettish to consent to this proposal of frequent letters and intimate liaison," wrote Charrière to d'Hermenches.

MUSÉE DES SUISSES À L'ÉTRANGER-CHÂTEAU DE PENTHES-GENÈVE

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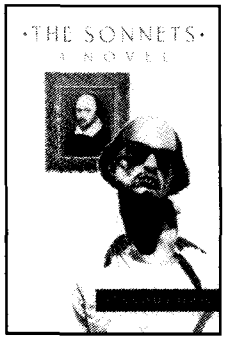
compresses her indecisiveness into a single paragraph: "Farewell, my dear d'Hermenches.... Let's keep on writing."

Much of the affair's frisson derives from the parade of lovers and spouses who pass through the letters over the fifteen years of their exchange. James Boswell was the best known of Isabelle's suitors. Yet it was d'Hermenches's good friend, the Marquis de Bellegarde, who most aroused her interest. In scores of letters, we see Isabelle and d'Hermenches devising scheme after scheme to win parental approval for a match that was never to be. Could marriage to Bellegarde finally have brought Isabelle and d'Hermenches together? In a particularly bold passage, Charrière declares that if the union with Bellegarde is not to be, she will "renounce marriage altogether" and rid herself of "this so-called virtue of chastity...a privation that is tiresome for me and does no good for anybody."

D'Hermenches's womanizing may have served to win him military commissions.

Such romantic machinations will inevitably remind modern audiences of Choderlos de Laclos's libertine novel *Les liaisons dangereuses* (1782), but Charrière scholars agree that Rousseau's *Julie, ou La nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) provided the clearest literary model for the correspondence. Borrowing Rousseau's vocabulary of virtuous transparency, Isabelle writes, "I believed that we would become better friends if we spoke the language of virtue...and I was pleased to think that our correspondence...would perhaps, instead of familiarizing me with licentiousness, reconcile you with duty." In several letters, Isabelle invokes the name Julie. Perhaps she was imagining life at Clarens, where Rousseau's heroine learned to live both happily and guiltlessly with her husband and her lover.

The Whatleys, however, see more than forbidden romance in the letters. They eagerly point out links to broad swaths of eighteenth-century culture and to some of the most influential people of the time. Malcolm particularly seeks to bring d'Hermenches's career in the Swiss and French armies to the fore. Letters from Corsica, where d'Hermenches fought to suppress an independence movement in 1768, meld insights on military strategy with grisly battle details and musings on colonialism. Although Malcolm argues that d'Hermenches was more intelligent than previous biographers have conceded, he also suggests the officer's rise through the ranks owed more to savvy socializing than to military prowess. Even d'Hermenches's womanizing might have served pragmatic ends: Lesser soldiers, observes Malcolm,



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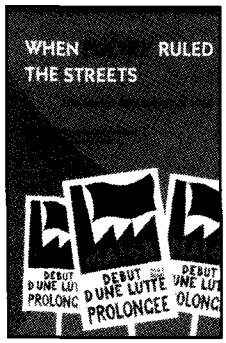

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could win commissions by going "through the wives of the field marshals."

The Whatleys' exhaustive annotations support their claim that the d'Hermenches-Charrière romance had "tentacles." Early in the relationship, Isabelle develops a new admiration for d'Hermenches when she learns that he has joined with Voltaire in championing the ill-used Calas family. The Whatleys devote several pages of notes to this cause célèbre, which saw the Huguenot Frenchman Calas wrongfully convicted of murdering his son and then broken on the wheel. Voltaire's loud condemnation of the brutal execution had won the hearts of Protestants throughout Europe. In turn, d'Hermenches's attempts to aid Calas supporters seeking refuge outside France helped him to win Isabelle's affections.

Isabelle married Charles-Emmanuel de Charrière in 1771. As Janet Whatley reminds us, Simone de Beauvoir once lamented that "marriage assassinated the dazzling Belle de Zuylen." In a final round of letters, Isabelle explains, "I cannot write to you without recalling ideas that I would rather put far from me." With these words, the romance, like so many of Charrière's tales, drifted toward an unsatisfying ending.

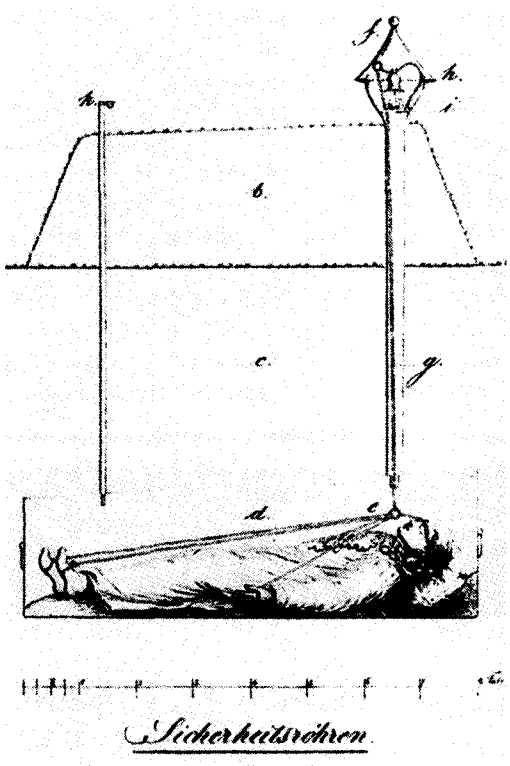
LAURA AURICCHIO

GRAVE ERRORS

BETWEEN THE SIXTEENTH AND NINETEENTH centuries, Europe and America were gripped by a veritable hysteria over the possibility of being interred prematurely. "The unendurable oppression of the lungs," wrote Edgar Allan Poe in his tale "The Premature Burial," "the stifling fumes of the damp earth"—this was the stuff of almost ritualized collective nightmares throughout Christian society.

Before World War I, it seems, the public did not trust that doctors could accurately diagnose death. Wild rumors therefore spread, often fueled by sensational tales of opened coffins filled with grotesquely contorted cadavers, some of them with shattered fingernails and clumps of hair in their hands. Evil tidings proliferated, suggesting that as many as one in ten people could expect to be buried alive. What else could explain those hideous acrobatics inside the grave?

In *Buried Alive* (W.W. Norton), Jan Bondeson explains that in the absence of scientific certainty, the medical profession went to fantastic lengths to prove death. A crusading eighteenth-century French doctor named Bruhier was among the first to address the question. Bruhier's ideas soon inspired an ingenious medic named Antoine Louis to devise a bagpipe-like contraption that pumped a tobacco enema up the luckless cadaver's rear end: If that didn't wake the undead, what would? A Belgian physician created a more precise enema



bladder called a *Doppelbläser*. Presumably, if you were roused from oblivion by means of a *Doppelbläser*, you might wish you were still dead.

In the late eighteenth century, an enterprising German doctor named Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland invented a special rotting house euphemistically dubbed a *vitae dubiae* asylum, later commonly called a *Leichenhaus*. These gloomy temples soon became immensely popular. Complete with marble putti and funereal bouquets, they housed hundreds of corpses with systems of strings tied to their fingers. The strings were fastened to a large bell, which would instantly peal if a cadaver "awoke." If these measures seem absurd, consider the case of a professor's wife in Tübingen who collapsed one day in the sixth month of pregnancy. Doctors thrust pins under

Before World War I, it seems, the public did not trust that doctors could accurately diagnose death.

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Luxurious coffins were equipped with pillows, comfortable padding, oxygen tubes, and bottles of port.

her nails, ripped the skin off her soles with mustard plaster, and applied glowing irons to her "sensitive parts," with no apparent reaction. But six days later she revived, gave birth to a dead baby, and recovered completely. The seemingly dead, in other words, might need protection and rights just as they did when fully alive.

Cases like this led Hufeland to conclude in 1808 that real death was commonly preceded by a deep trancelike state he called the *Scheintod*, or death trance. In this state, normal arterial pulses appeared to cease, as did respiration and muscular reflexes. But the death trance was not always fatal. On rare occasions, one might actually wake up from it—either a joyful event or a ghastly one, depending on your situation.

The notion of the *Scheintod* spurred inventors to produce a contraption they called a security coffin. A German pastor proposed inserting a hollow tube into every coffin so that the inmate could breathe if he or she woke up. Soon, mechanical alarm bells were installed in graveyards and connected to the corpses' fingers. The inventor Johann Hypelli suggested that when a corpse awoke, he or she would instinctively try to sit up. Why not, Hypelli argued, connect a bell to a string that would be activated by the resounding bang of a head against the coffin lid? Security coffins eventually became incredibly elaborate. Luxurious models were equipped with pillows, comfortable padding, oxygen tubes, and bottles of port. And they remained popular well into the twentieth century: In the United States alone, twenty-two patents were issued for security coffins between 1868 and 1925.

Indeed, one of the most sensational cases of premature burial occurred in 1937, when Angelo Hays, a nineteen-year-old French boy, was pronounced dead from a motorcycle accident. Two days after Hays was buried, suspicious insurance agents demanded that the body be exhumed (Hays's father had taken a life-insurance policy on his son a short while earlier). Miraculously, Hays was still alive and went on to make a complete recovery, becoming something of a celebrity in France. In the 1970s, he invented an astounding £4,500 security coffin—featuring a small library, a food locker, a control dashboard to regulate oxygen supply, a chemical toilet, a shortwave radio transmitter, a fridge, a hi-fi, and an oven. On live television, Hays had himself buried in his coffin, from which he gaily sang his favorite songs.

Was the Western world's preoccupation with premature burial justified, or was it mere morbid

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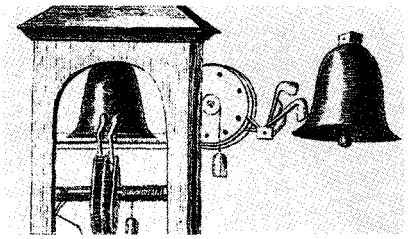
fantasy? Mostly the latter, writes Bondeson. The contortions of dead bodies, after all, were most often caused by a buildup of corpse gases, which sometimes led to awful eruptions. These ranged from a curious moaning as the gases passed through the windpipe to spontaneous detonations—as in the infamous case of William the Conqueror, whose corpse exploded with the force of a stun grenade.

According to Bondeson, the Christian obsession with the body after death derives from the belief in resurrection. But during the Renaissance, the power of Christianity over people's imaginations began to wane. Interest in decaying bodies became secularized; thus people began to entertain more prosaic worries about their eventual residence in the coffin. "The prevailing hypothesis," Bondeson concludes, "supported by Philippe Ariès and the majority of later writers, is that the fear of being buried alive was a by-product of the ongoing process of de-Christianization."



Bondeson doesn't really try to map the curve of this de-Christianization as it related to burial neuroses. Instead, he offers the reader a deliciously ghoulish potted history of absurd burial techniques. But he also mines a second theory: "The anti–premature burial movement of the 1890s," he writes, "should be viewed as one of several internally linked organizations opposed to medical science." Bondeson notes that the late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of an antiscience movement in Britain and America, where spiritualists like William Tebb and Lizzy Lind-af-Hageby opposed medical research and deeply distrusted doctors. Suffragettes, vegetarian societies, teetotaler groups, and "organized spiritualists and quacks" together inquired (as one 1895 magazine article had it) "How the State May Prevent Premature Burial."

All in all, the fixation on this primordial human nightmare emerges as both perfectly understandable and deeply insane. Between these two points, Bondeson weaves a strange, disturbing, and weirdly enthralling tale. Cremation never sounded so good.

LAWRENCE OSBORNE

William the Conqueror's corpse exploded with the force of a stun grenade.

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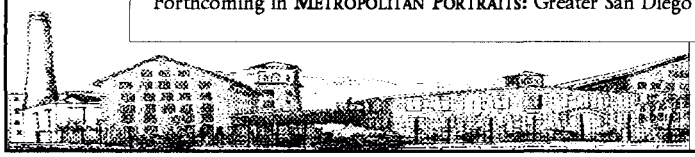

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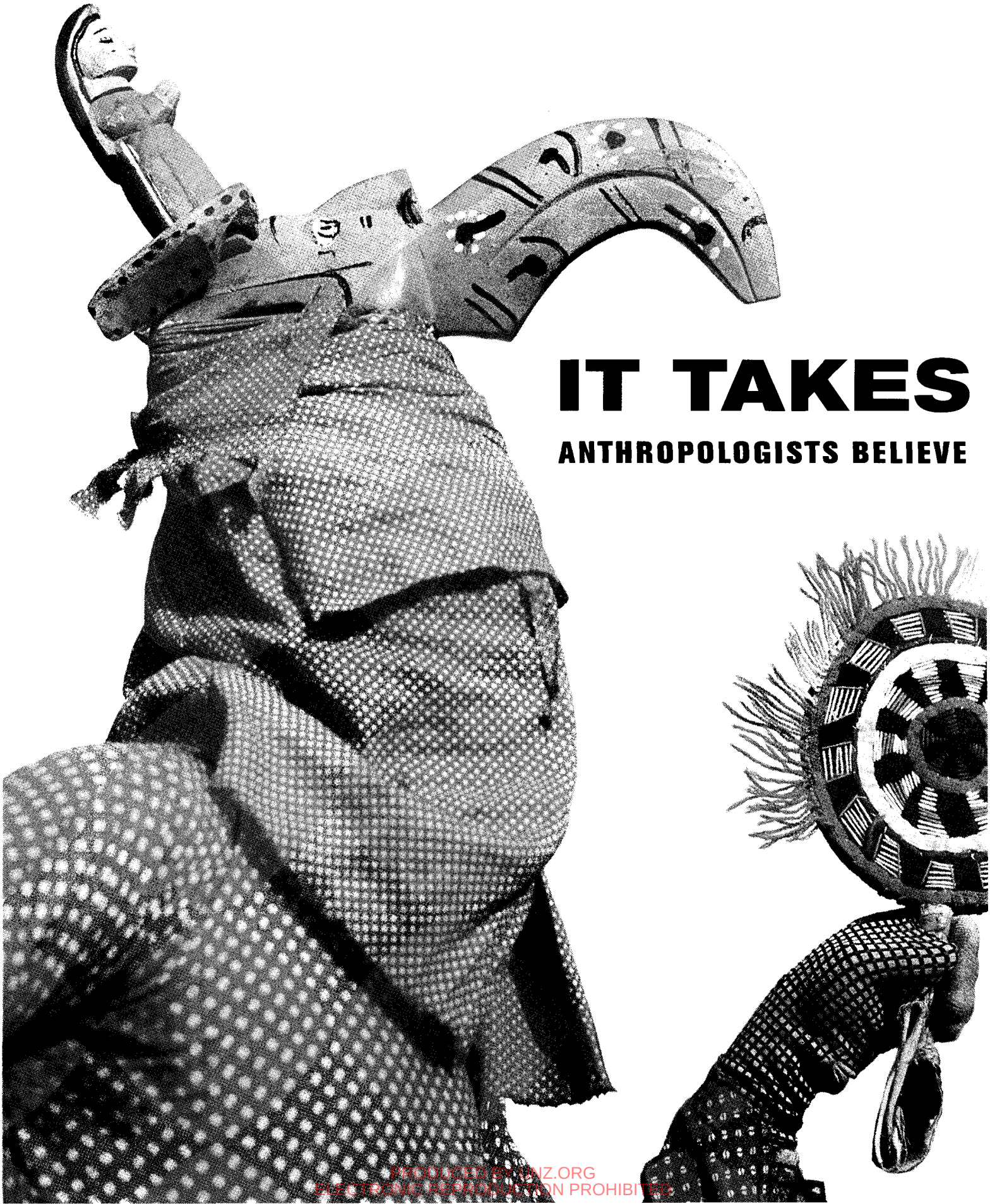

IT TAKES

ANTHROPOLOGISTS BELIEVE

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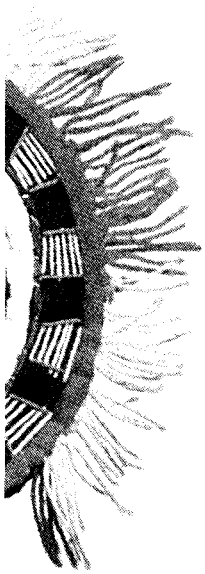
BY **MATTHEW STEINGLASS**

A VILLAGE HEALER

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE CAN REMEDY AFRICA'S AIDS CRISIS. ARE THEY RIGHT?



ON A HOT SUNDAY EVENING, IN A MANIOC field near the village of Gboto in the small West African nation of Togo, a group of men in city clothes rustle through the brush, periodically stopping to look at bits of uncovered root. At the center of the group stands a stout, gray-haired man in an embroidered African shirt, giving directions. He doesn't seem to be finding what he's looking for. He stops to finger a bush with wide leaves.

"This is called *ahonto,*" he says. "It's good for renal problems." But it isn't the plant he needs.

A few dozen yards further on, he pushes into a thicket and motions toward one of his companions, a muscular field hand carrying a machete. The field hand thrusts his machete into the ground, digs until he encounters a root, and then begins to slice away at it. It takes a few minutes of brisk whacking before he comes up with a length of smooth, tan tuber. The man in the embroidered shirt holds it up, examines it, and nods.

"This is *hetsi,*" he says with satisfaction.

The man in the embroidered shirt is Dr. Kokou Coco Toudji-Bandje, an African healer who concocts herbal remedies for a variety of ailments. One of these remedies is something he calls Tobacoak's. He believes it is a "natural antiretroviral." More specifically, he says Tobacoak's "destroys HIV in the blood." Over the past ten years, Toudji-Bandje has used Tobacoak's to treat over three thousand AIDS patients. Most of them, he says, have gotten better—and some have been completely cured.

Toudji-Bandje is not the only herbal healer in Africa who claims the ability to cure AIDS, but he is one of the best known. Patients fly from as far away as Congo to see him. He has a large air-conditioned villa-cum-office in Togo's capital city, Lomé. He has a Mercedes and a white Toyota van. According to a few other doctors who have looked into his finances, he has tremendous amounts of money. The one thing Toudji-Bandje does not actually have is an M.D., but he doesn't seem to miss it much.

Most members of the Western intellectual community consider people like

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Toudji-Bandje part of Africa's AIDS problem, not its solution. The dimensions of that problem are by now depressingly familiar: HIV-positive rates in southern Africa run to 20 percent and higher. More than twenty-five million sub-Saharan Africans are already infected, and hundreds of millions more are at risk. No one knows what will happen to the social fabric in these countries when cumulative death rates climb into double digits. Under the circumstances, you might think that anyone who would distract attention from HIV education and prevention efforts by claiming to have cured the disease with an herbal concoction is not the kind of guy international organizations should be working with.

If so, you would have been surprised to see Toudji-Bandje at last December's crucial meeting of the Africa Development Forum, in Addis Ababa, where a continent-wide AIDS strategy was under development. Toudji-Bandje came with the official Togolese delegation, and the World Health Organization paid his way. He was representing a constituency that the WHO believes should be an integral part of the campaign against AIDS in Africa: traditional healers.

The WHO's support for collaboration between traditional healers and Western-style public-health systems in Africa actually dates back well before the AIDS epidemic. Public-health experts have advocated such collaboration since the 1970s, drawing on arguments that range from the practical (the crippling lack of M.D.s and trained nurses in the developing world) to the ideological (a refusal to privilege Western biomedical science over alternative systems of medical belief). And some of the most enthusiastic advocates of collaboration with traditional healers have been those Western academics whose job it is to study them: medical anthropologists.

MEDICAL anthropology's slice of the academic pie consists in studying different cultures' beliefs and practices relating to health and disease. A typical medical anthropologist might spend his time sitting in the homes of Bono healers in north-central Ghana, looking into how they deal with diarrhea: what diseases they associate with the symptom (*ayamtuo, asonkyere*), what they think causes the diseases (unclean substances, contagion), how they treat the diseases (herbal solutions, enemas), and how their disease

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FROM LEFT: TRADITIONAL HEALER IN GHANA, 1997; HEALER AND PATIENT IN SOUTH AFRICA; HEALER MERCI MANCI HUGS PERSON IN CONDOM COSTUME AT THE INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA, JULY 2000

FAR LEFT AND RIGHT: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

ANTHROPOLOGISTS USED TO CONSIDER TRADITIONAL HEALERS A VANISHING BREED IN NEED OF PROTECTION. TODAY, ANYONE WHO TALKED THAT WAY WOULD BE LAUGHED OUT OF THE LECTURE HALL.

typologies match up with those of Western medicine (malaria, food poisoning). An anthropologist studying the Manica of Mozambique would find a completely different conception of diarrhea than that of the Bono: The disease might be attributed to a disturbance of a child's "internal snake," to exposure to heat, or to a father touching his still-breastfeeding child after committing adultery and then failing to wash his hands. With its multitude of ethnic groups, who speak more than eight hundred different languages and construct who knows how many startlingly innovative theories of diarrhea, Africa provides medical anthropologists a never-ending supply of thesis fodder.

Back in the 1960s and early 1970s, some medical anthropologists claimed that African traditional healers were a vanishing breed in need of protection from the onslaught of modernity. Today, anyone who talked that way would be laughed out of the lecture hall. Modernity doesn't seem to be doing too well in Africa. Traditional healers, on the other hand, are going strong. There are quite possibly more than two million healers in Africa, and an estimated 80 percent of sub-Saharan Africans consult them. In some countries, these healers outnumber Western-style medical professionals by around forty to one.

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If you go into an average village in Togo looking for biomedical health care, you're likely to find an almost empty dispensary, staffed perhaps one or two days a week by a poorly trained community health worker. The same village might have three or four traditional healers within easy walking distance, each ensconced in an attractive compound with flags flying from the roof. And while the community health worker often has a social standing equivalent to that of a cashier at Dairy Queen, traditional healers are generally among the most powerful and respected members of village society.

MEDICAL anthropologists typically divide healers into two main categories: herbalists and diviner-mediums. The healers' work ranges from administering herbal treatments to eradicating spirit possession to dream interpretation. When it comes to answering the obvious questions—Do the diseases diagnosed by traditional healers actually exist? Do the healers' practices help sick patients?—medical anthropologists are supposed to remain strictly nonjudgmental. And yet, they are typically Westerners, who share a basically biomedical understanding of disease etiology. Medical anthropologists handle this clash of worldviews the same way any of us handle conversations with people whose outlooks differ radically from our own: They finesse the issues. They try not to bring them up. They concentrate on areas of agreement.

The problem is that medical anthropologists' particular area of concentration happens to be one in which certain questions can't be finessed. When children are dying of diarrhea-induced dehydration, and you, as a Westerner, think you know how to save them, you can't sit back and watch a traditional healer apply a treatment you believe to be ineffective. You want to do something.

Starting in the late 1970s, some medical anthropologists began doing more than studying traditional healers—they started working with them. Some saw training traditional healers in Western-style biomedicine as a potential solution to Africa's drastic shortfall of trained health-care personnel. Others thought traditional healers might know things—about medicinal herbs, or about how to deliver care in a spiritually wholesome fashion—that Western doctors didn't. Twenty years later, these same medical anthropologists are spearheading the drive to include traditional healers in AIDS prevention and care. One of the first was Edward C. Green, an independent anthropologist whose 1994 book, *AIDS and STDs in Africa: Bridging the Gap Between Traditional Healing and Modern Medicine,* made the clearest case yet for bringing healers on board in the fight against AIDS.

Green's book drew on his experience in South Africa, where he had established a program that trained traditional healers as educators for AIDS prevention. Such programs, Green was convinced, could be crucial to stopping the spread of HIV. In fact, he wrote in his book, any successful effort to fight AIDS in Africa would have to include "some sort of collaborative action program involving traditional healers."

Traditional healers pervade African societies, Green stressed; instead of ignoring them, doctors and health educators should view them as an untapped resource. His research showed that while Africans rely on doctors and hospitals to treat many illnesses, most believe that traditional healers are better than doctors at curing sexually transmitted diseases. At least part of the reason is that unlike doctors, healers tend to take a "holistic" approach, treating the patient's spiritual and physical well-being together. With a terminal disease like AIDS, the spiritual side becomes very important. In any event, Green reasoned, patients consult traditional healers whether or not the healers have been educated in AIDS prevention. Untrained healers might spread inaccurate information or engage in harmful practices. Moreover, Green asserted, traditional healers are eager to learn about Western medical ideas, and they put what they learn to good use.

Green's controversial ideas largely stemmed from a single core belief: African societies are not a tabula rasa onto which Western biomedicine can simply be imposed. Traditional healers embody the indigenous African medical culture, which cannot be ignored. As Green would later write, "It is Western medicine that is 'alternative' for most Africans."

THESE IDEAS were surprisingly new to the debate on AIDS in Africa, but they weren't new to Green. He had been dealing with them for most of his professional career—a career that neatly parallels the history of medical anthropology's efforts to bring traditional healers into the public-health mainstream.

The WHO first declared itself in favor of increased collaboration with traditional healers in 1977. That same year, Green, then an assistant professor of anthropology at West Virginia University, got an offer from Population Action International to go to West Africa to research population growth in the Sahel region. At some point during the trip, he had "a moment of epiphany," he says. "I was in Niger, I think, and somebody said, 'You know, we have a terrible malnutrition problem among pregnant women, and we have one good source of protein: chicken eggs. But there's a taboo against pregnant women eating eggs. Now, if we could just get an anthropologist in here to figure out a way around that taboo.'" Green laughs. "...I thought, gee whiz, you know, I could be applying what I know to life-and-death issues on a grand scale, instead of teaching anthropology to recalcitrant students who are fulfilling a social-science obligation."

Green never did get around to tackling the egg problem, but later in the same trip he had a second epiphany. At a cocktail party in Ghana, he ran into Michael Warren, a medical anthropologist from Iowa State. Warren was setting up one of the first serious programs to train traditional healers in Western health-care techniques. Called Primary Health Training for Indigenous Healers Programme (PRHETIH), Warren's project eventually trained hundreds of traditional healers in a few simple biomedical health-care precepts: diagnosing and treating diarrhea, malnutrition, febrile convulsions, and the like.

BY THE EARLY 1980s, Green had transformed himself into a medical anthropologist, trading in his recalcitrant college students for eager witch doctors. Having completed a study of traditional healers' responses to Swaziland's first cholera outbreak, he worked with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to make recommendations for integrating traditional healers into the Swazi public-health-care system. "We did a survey, and we found

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that something like 99 percent of the healers wanted to learn Western medical techniques," he says. "So I showed these results to the medical association of Swaziland, thinking all these doctors would be so happy that the traditional healers want to learn! And I finished my presentation, and the questions from the doctors were: Why aren't these guys in jail? They're practicing medicine without a license. Why isn't someone arresting them?"

Nevertheless, Green and a Swazi colleague, Dr. Lydia Makhubu, managed to set up some workshops. "The first healers came in disguise, dressed as civilians," he says. "By the second or third workshop, they were coming in full regalia, dressed in feathers and beads, and waving their...paraphernalia. Out of the closet, as it were."

Through the rest of the 1980s and into the 1990s, Green worked all over Africa on projects related to traditional medicine—in Nigeria, Liberia, South Africa, and Mozambique. With another USAID grant, Green set up a program in South Africa in 1992 to train thirty healers as trainers-of-trainers in HIV prevention. These healers would each be expected to train thirty other healers, and so on, hopefully reaching twenty-seven thousand healers by the third generation. The training sessions described the etiology of AIDS in terms culturally meaningful to traditional healers. White blood cells were described as healers' apprentices who guard the master healers, T-cells. During sex, the enemy, HIV, sneaks in and kills the master healers, takes their places, and tricks the apprentices into thinking they are still taking orders from their superiors. The enemy orders the apprentices to let in more and more HIV, until finally the enemy takes over the whole body.

When Green evaluated the traditional healers who had completed the program, he found that their knowledge about AIDS had significantly increased. They were willing to recommend and supply condoms to patients. They were eager to counsel patients against sexual promiscuity, which many healers already considered dangerous. And they understood that AIDS could be transmitted by sharing the same razor for ritual scarification, but not by sharing a spoon.

By this time, Green was far from the only one running such programs. In 1992, a medical anthropologist named Rachel King, working with Médecins Sans Frontières in Uganda, had started a program called Traditional and Modern Health Practitioners Together Against AIDS (THETA). The program initially trained just seventeen healers, but it did so intensively: fifteen months of training, three days a month. Before the program, according to King, healers were "reluctant to discuss AIDS with their clients, because they feared losing them." After the program, healers promoted and distributed condoms to their clients, counseled them on "positive living," and staged AIDS-education performances using music and theater. Evaluators compared the rate of condom use in areas where THETA had been active with the rate in non-THETA areas. It was 50 percent versus 17 percent.

EIGHT YEARS later, THETA is still going strong, and Uganda is an unparalleled AIDS success story. In 1993, Uganda had an overall HIV-positive rate that reached 14 percent, one of the highest in Africa at the time. As of 2000, Uganda had cut that rate to about 8 percent. It is the only country in the world ever to have fought double-digit HIV-positive rates back down into single digits.

Of course, many things had to go right for that to happen: Uganda's AIDS prevention programs were strong in every sector, involving religious leaders from every major community, including both Christians and Muslims. (In 1989 the mufti of Uganda officially declared a jihad on AIDS.) Community AIDS education projects honeycombed the country, working in every demographic group from market women to bicycle-taxi boys. Uganda had sub-Saharan Africa's first voluntary and anonymous HIV testing program and its first nationwide, multisectoral AIDS prevention coordinating body. Most important, the country's president made a firm political commitment to stopping AIDS. Still, Green feels that THETA served as an invaluable model for other programs in Uganda. "I'm not going to say it's *the* thing that stopped AIDS in Uganda—there is no one thing, there never is," he says. "But I think it was significant."

Throughout the 1990s, local and foreign governments, as well as NGOs, set up collaborative programs with traditional healers in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia. Medical anthropology's efforts to integrate traditional healers into the fight against AIDS appeared to be succeeding. But there was one problem: None of these other countries had actually managed to stop the spread of HIV. Green's program in South Africa did not prevent infection rates there from zooming up toward the 20 percent mark, and they're still climbing. In Botswana the rate has been estimated as high as 36 percent.

HEALERS ATTENDED THE FIRST WORKSHOP IN DISGUISE. BUT BY THE SECOND ONE, THEY CAME "IN FULL REGALIA, DRESSED IN FEATHERS AND BEADS," SAYS GREEN. "OUT OF THE CLOSET, AS IT WERE."

WHAT HAPPENED? In 1999, one of the grand old men of African demographic research, John C. Caldwell, a professor emeritus at the Australian National University at Canberra, presided over a conference on resistance to sexual behavior change in the face of AIDS. In a paper he delivered at the conference, Caldwell put the problem this way:

> There is a mystery at the heart of the African epidemic, which urgently needs explanation.... Much lower HIV seroprevalence levels and AIDS deaths have led elsewhere to marked changes in sexual behaviour and to an early decline in HIV incidence.... In northern Thailand the first evidence of the arrival of the AIDS

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epidemic led to brothels closing as clients' numbers dwindled, even before government interventions were put in place....

There is now some evidence of the beginning of sexual behaviour change in Uganda and of declining HIV incidence and prevalence. Research elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa shows no such change. ... At first it was thought possible to explain this lack of change in terms of inadequate information.... Over time, this explanation has become ever less tenable. The Demographic and Health Survey program had shown that among men, 98 percent knew of AIDS in 1991–92 in Tanzania and 99 percent in 1998 in Kenya. For women, levels of knowledge were 93 percent in Tanzania in 1991–92 and 99 percent in Zambia in 1992 and in Kenya in 1998. The great majority knew of the dangers of sexual transmission.

So why didn't they do anything to protect themselves?

Next stop on the tour is Ward 4, the long-term-care ward. Only eight of the ward's beds are occupied. That, explains Dr. Hammad, is because the hospital does not treat AIDS patients.

"There's nothing we can do for them here," he says. "If they're rich, they go off to Europe. If they're poor, we send them home to die."

It's not entirely true that the hospital can do nothing. Hammad can treat the opportunistic infections that attack AIDS patients in the early stages of HIV infection, and if their immune systems have not deteriorated too badly, he can prolong their lives. And this is where Hammad's frustration with traditional healers manifests itself.

"I have people come to me with problems that suggest they may be HIV positive, and I tell them, go get tested and then come back," he says. "And then they disappear for six months. I go to the test lab and ask, what happened to this person? And they say, yes, we tested him. Then suddenly six months later the person shows up in my office again, practically on the point of death. And he says, 'Oh, I tested HIV positive, so I went to the traditional healer, but it didn't work. So I went to another healer, but it didn't work either.' So now they're back, and now I can't do anything for them. It's too late. Educated people! And they go to these healers! It's crazy!"

THE WITCHCRAFT QUESTION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT BEARS ON COLLABORATION. IF TRADITIONAL HEALERS ATTRIBUTE DISEASES TO SORCERY, THERE IS NOT MUCH DOCTORS CAN DO WITH THEM.

ZEIDAN HAMMAD is an internal-medicine specialist at CHU-Tokoin Hospital, the main public hospital in Lomé. The Lebanese-born Hammad was trained in Cuba, and as he walks me through the hospital's rather decrepit white-stucco facilities, he grumbles about the staff's idea of a sterile environment.

"They spread the clean linen out on the ground to dry," he says, waving at multicolored sheets draped across the bushes and dusty grass in the hospital courtyard. "They like that it dries faster that way. You know, in Cuba, there was no money for anything, but they kept things clean!"

The first stop on Hammad's tour is the HIV testing lab, and for this, at least, he has nothing but praise. The lab's two machines, for performing the ELISA and Western Blot tests for HIV, are in perfect, spotless condition, and the staff is efficient and professional. The tests, which cost about three dollars each, are administered in strict privacy, and results are made available to no one but the patient. The lab processes hundreds of results every month.

IF HAMMAD AND Green were to discuss the value of traditional healers in African health care, they would probably have a hard time keeping their voices down. But sixty years ago, doctors and anthropologists were more united in their frustration with traditional African medical culture. In fact, one of the foundational texts of medical anthropology is E.E. Evans-Pritchard's 1937 classic, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*. The book is essentially a limit case of a culture with which Westerners cannot collaborate. When Habermas or Rorty wants an illustration of a worldview that rests on axioms so different from our own that communication between the two cultures is virtually impossible, they turn to Evans-Pritchard's Azande. According to Evans-Pritchard, the reason the Azande worldview is so inimical to the Western one is that it considers diseases, and other misfortunes, to be caused by sorcery. Whether or not Evans-Pritchard thought the Azande believed *all* diseases to be caused by sorcery has been an ongoing argument in anthropology for sixty years now. Another ongoing argument has been the question of whether Evans-Pritchard's observations about the Azande hold for the rest of Africa as well.

Until fairly recently, most anthropologists felt that they do. G.P. Murdock, whose *Africa: Its Peoples and Their Culture History* is a seminal ethnography of the continent, wrote in 1980 that mystical retribution and sorcery are the main African explanations for disease. George Foster, whose 1976 paper "Disease Etiologies in Non-Western Medical Systems" is another classic of the field, wrote in 1983 that "personalistic" explanations of disease—that is, you get sick because someone, human or demonic, wants you to get sick—predominate in Africa. Most other anthropologists and social scientists, both Western and African, agreed.

Some social-science researchers have blamed the persistence of personalistic theories of disease causation for the failure of Africans to alter their sexual behavior in the face of AIDS. These scholars have hypothesized that Africans' failure to use condoms or limit their number of sexual partners stems partly from the belief that you don't get AIDS unless an enemy wants you to get it. The idea that personalistic ideas about disease are reducing the ability of ordinary Africans to cope with AIDS is even more widespread among doctors like

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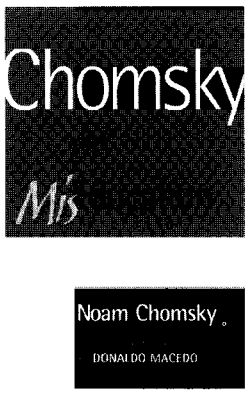

Chomsky on MisEducation

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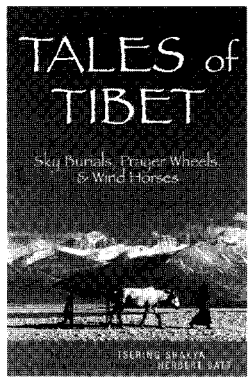

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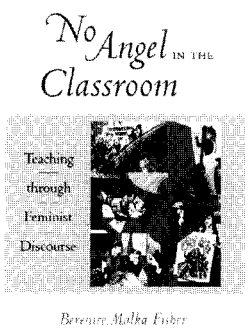

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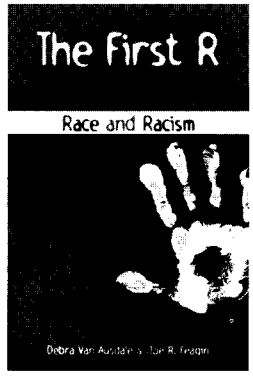

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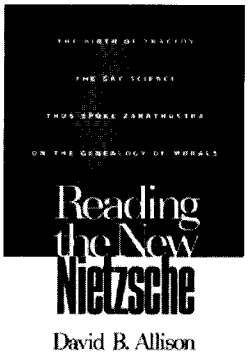

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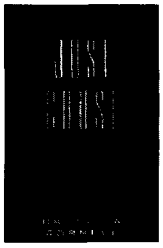

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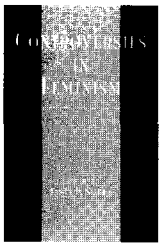

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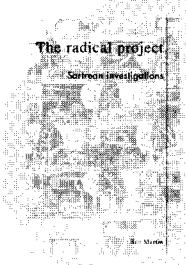

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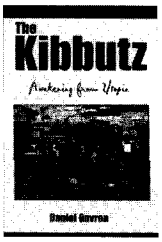

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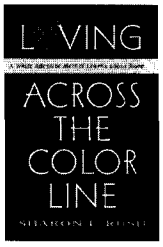

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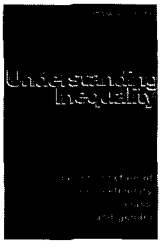

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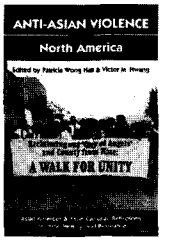

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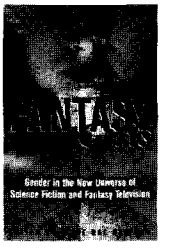

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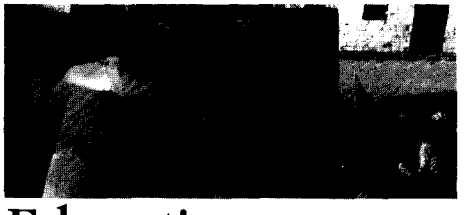

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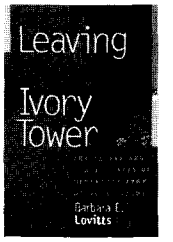

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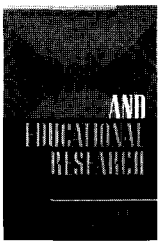

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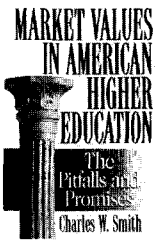

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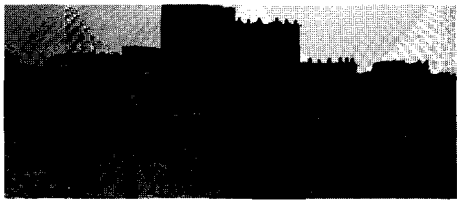

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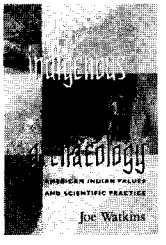

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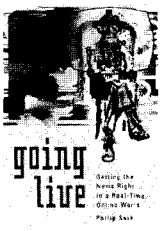

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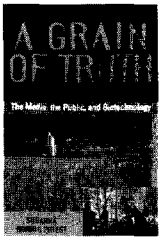

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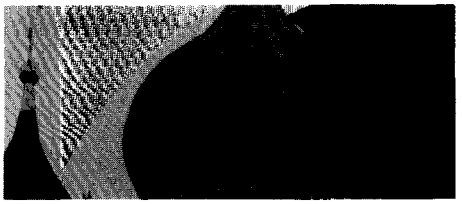

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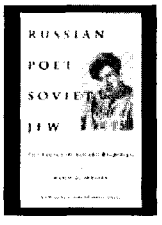

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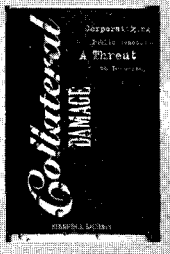

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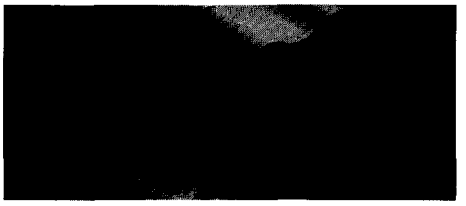

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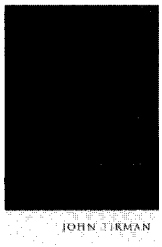

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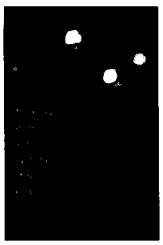

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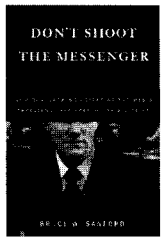

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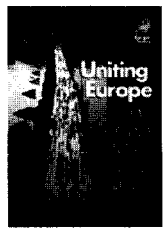

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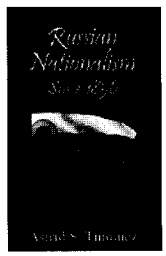

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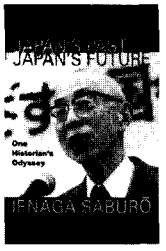

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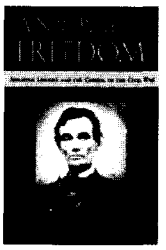

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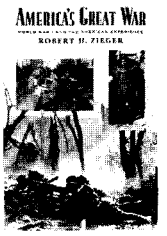

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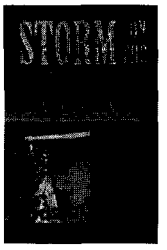

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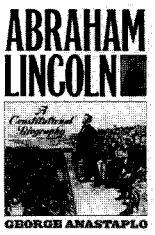

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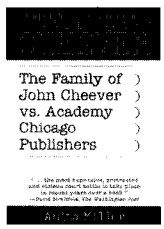

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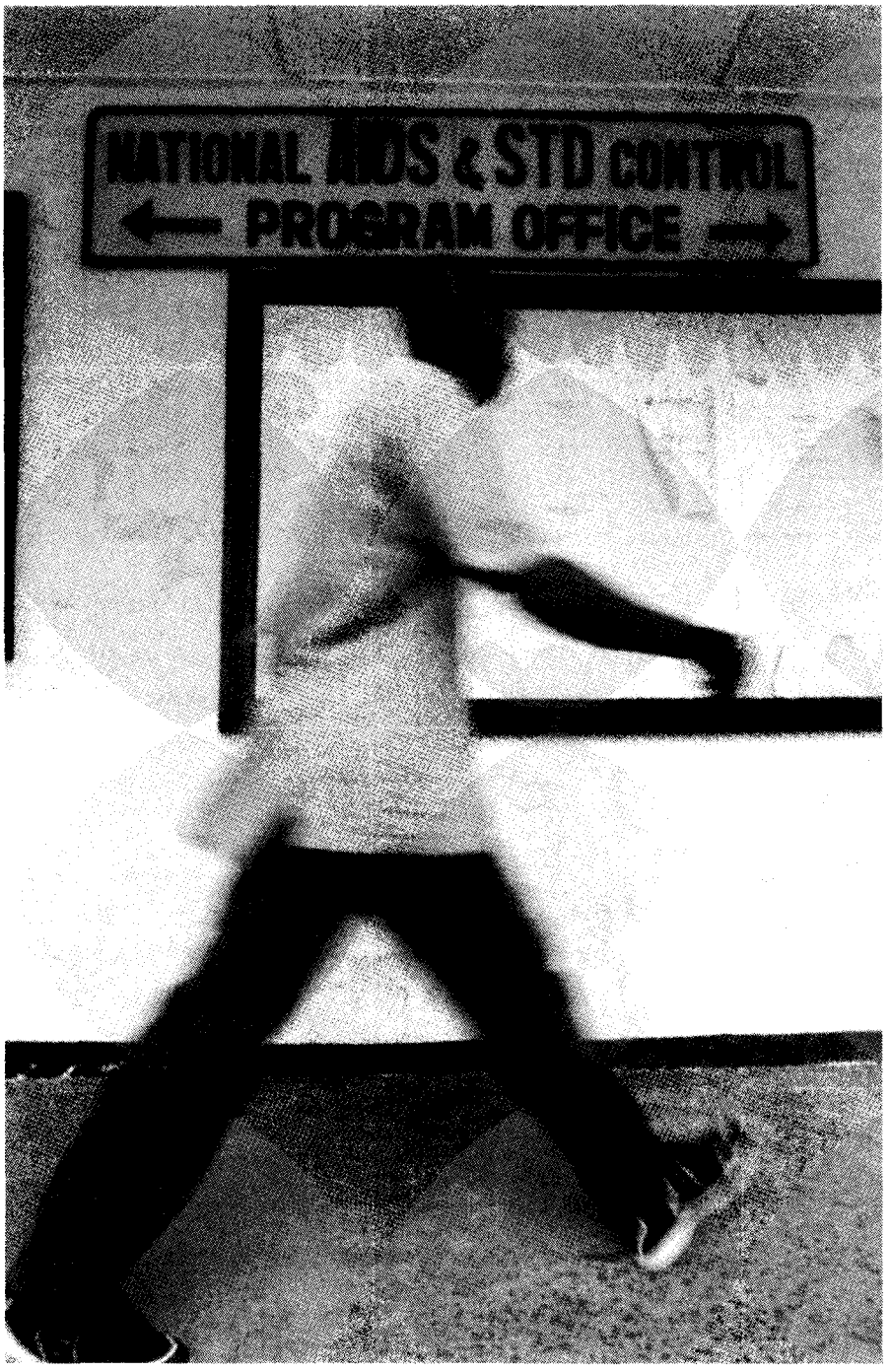
Hammad. Doctors and public-health officials, both Western and African, widely blame the failure of HIV prevention in Africa on local belief in witchcraft, sorcery, and *gris-gris* (black magic).

But they are working with a previous generation's understanding of African traditional medicine. In recent years, anthropologists have reassessed the importance of witchcraft to the African view of disease. In the 1970s, Michael Warren, the founder of the PRHETIH project, began arguing that the Bono of Ghana actually saw most diseases as impersonally caused—that is, caused by environmental factors, whether natural or supernatural, rather than by the malign will of another human being or a deity. Over the years more and more anthropologists have made similar findings with other African ethnic groups.

Anthropologists such as Harriet Ngubane, Mary Douglas, Michael Gelfand, and David Hammond-Tooke reported that ideas of contagion and pollution were actually widespread among many African societies. Some Africans believed that diseases were caused by tiny, invisible insects, or that illness was transmitted by contact with impure substances such as feces or menstrual blood. Shona healers in Zimbabwe practiced variolation, the rubbing of fluid from an infected person's pustule into a cut on a noninfected person, to stimulate an immune response. Practices in other ethnic groups might not have been so obviously biomedically effective, but the important thing was that they were based on *impersonal* theories of disease causation: You contracted a disease because you happened to come into contact with someone or something, not because a person or deity was using magic against you.

Green ascribes the overemphasis on witchcraft by earlier anthropologists in part to "xenophilia"—an attraction to the more exotic and flamboyant elements of African medical culture. (*Witchcraft Among the Azande* is a much sexier title than, say, *Pollution Beliefs Among the Azande.*) He also thinks many researchers were not thinking clearly about how to classify beliefs. For example, African survey respondents, asked to explain the causes of certain diseases, may reply, "It's the will of God." This has often been classified by researchers as a "supernatural" or personalistic response. But does it have to be? A Western oncologist might utter the same words when asked why a child contracts leukemia.



MAN LEAVING AIDS CLINIC, MONROVIA, LIBERIA, 1999

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There are, undeniably, traditional healers who believe AIDS can be caused by witchcraft. In one oft-cited case in Zambia, a community's devastation by AIDS in the early 1990s led it to consult a "witch finder," who allegedly poisoned some fifteen suspected witches. In a Liberian survey, 13 percent of healers, local leaders, and health workers interviewed named witchcraft as a cause of STDs. But that put witchcraft well behind promiscuity, stepping in urine, or sex with an infected person.

The witchcraft question is important because it bears on the possibility of collaboration. If traditional healers believe that diseases are caused by witchcraft, there

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is not much you can do with them, from a biomedical perspective. They belong, as one doctor who worked in a district hospital in Africa for thirty-three years put it, to "a system that is irreconcilable with our own." But if traditional healers do not ascribe diseases to sorcery—even if they think illnesses are caused by tiny insects, by imbalances in semimystical forces of heat, by interference with the body's "internal snake," whatever—then you can work with that. You can describe the AIDS virus as a variety of the tiny invisible insects many indigenous medical traditions describe. You can build on many medical traditions' belief that promiscuous or adulterous sex results in pollution. You can collaborate.

More or less. Some medical anthropologists feel that even if traditional healers believe in naturalistic theories of disease causation, working with them is an iffy proposition.

In 1991, Peter Ventevogel, a Dutch medical student working on a master's thesis in medical anthropology, went to Ghana to follow up on Warren's famous PRHETIH project. The project had shut down in 1983, and Ventevogel wanted to find out what the healers had retained from their training. His findings, published in 1996 as *Whiteman's Things: Training and Detraining Healers in Ghana,* were interesting: On the one hand, the healers seemed to retain what they had learned in the workshops to a remarkable extent. On the other hand, they didn't actually seem to be putting that knowledge to use. They had learned that diarrhea could result in dehydration, and often remembered the formula for mixing oral rehydration salts, but almost none of them were actually doing it. They continued to treat diarrhea with herbal enemas, which biomedicine considers actively harmful. "PRHETIH was a powerful force attempting to change healers by training them," Ventevogel wrote. "But the healers formed an intractable counterforce, resisting training by 'detraining' themselves."

"The healers don't write their knowledge down and systematically compare it with each other," explains Ventevogel, now a psychiatrist in Amsterdam, in an interview. "The terms and beliefs differ in every village, in fact even in the same village. Their way of thinking is different from ours. I respect traditional healers, but you can't just mix Western scientific medicine and traditional healers up in a soup and expect to get something that makes any sense."

Unlike Ventevogel, Green thinks traditional medical beliefs are largely consistent within ethnic groups and even across them. But there is one of Ventevogel's critiques with which few people on the front lines would disagree. "Training traditional healers," Ventevogel writes, "is no panacea for a failing Western health care system." And in this belief, Ventevogel is joined by one of the more flamboyant medical anthropologists working on AIDS today: Dr. Paul Farmer.

PAUL FARMER runs a free clinic in a desperately poor region of rural Haiti. He also teaches at the Harvard Medical School and consults on numerous international infectious-disease projects, largely dealing with AIDS and tuberculosis. He made his mark in the AIDS field with a 1992 book called *AIDS and Accusation,* based on his experiences as an anthropologist in Haiti during the 1980s. One of the book's chief arguments was that the spread of AIDS in Haiti had been misattributed to "cultural factors"—particularly the belief in voodoo—when in fact it stemmed from socioeconomic causes: the country's vicious poverty, its lack of an adequate biomedical health-care system, and its exposure to a sex tourism trade that catered to Americans. Farmer did find that local interpretations of AIDS hinged on allegations of sorcery. But he didn't think that belief in sorcery was what was making the villages vulnerable. He thought they were vulnerable because they were poor.

Farmer doesn't think the spread of AIDS in Africa can be blamed on African traditional medical culture. The very notion, in Farmer's view, is merely a smokescreen behind which the rich West can evade responsibility for Africa's AIDS catastrophe. At the same time, he thinks that the newer emphasis on working with traditional healers has also served as an excuse for the West's failure to provide the world's poor with decent scientific medical care.

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TALK OF CULTURE CAN SERVE AS A SMOKESCREEN, SAYS FARMER. AFRICA HAS AN AIDS CRISIS NOT BECAUSE PEOPLE INSIST ON CONSULTING HEALERS, BUT BECAUSE AFRICA IS POOR.

We could stop AIDS in Africa, Farmer is saying—but we don't, because we don't want to spend the money.

This argument has become all the sharper recently, as generic antiretroviral drugs from Brazilian and Indian companies have pushed the cost of treatment ever lower. The recent offer by the Indian pharmaceutical company Cipla to supply Médecins Sans Frontières with an antiretroviral cocktail treatment for $350 per patient per year puts certified antiretrovirals into the same price class as the herbal remedy of Toudji-Bandje, whose six-month course of treatment costs $430. If Farmer is right—if the barriers to stopping AIDS in Africa are about money, not culture—then the cheaper the drugs get, the greater the pressure on the West will be to intervene.

GREEN spots a problem with Farmer's thesis. "The richest countries in Africa have the highest HIV rates," he says emphatically. "And the richest people in each country have the highest HIV rates." This may be an exaggeration, but there does seem to be some positive correlation between HIV rates and a nation's income. Botswana and South Africa are among the countries with the highest HIV-positive rates in southern Africa. The highest rate in West Africa is in Ivory Coast. These are the richest countries in their respective zones.

Early in the epidemic, some studies showed HIV rates rising with markers such as education level and travel. AIDS often seemed to hit the richer, more urban classes first. It struck the men who had the money to employ prostitutes. And, of course, their wives. As the epidemic wore on, these correlations became far less pronounced. After all, some of the poorest nations in sub-Saharan Africa—Zambia and Malawi, for example—also have extraordinarily high rates of infection. Still, most anthropologists agree that many rich, educated Africans continue to use traditional healers, though sometimes in conjunction with biomedical doctors and often in secret.

Whatever his differences with other anthropologists, Farmer agrees that collaborating with healers can be worthwhile. "I bet I work with them as much as anybody," he remarks. But he doesn't see healers as the repositories of a culture's accumulated medical wisdom. "When they're sick, they don't often go to each other," he says. "They come to see me."

In fact, Farmer doesn't just think traditional healers are ineffective. He thinks they're not really traditional: "It may have been different in Central America, Africa, and Asia in the past, but now you see that most 'traditional' healers use antibiotics, and a weird amalgam of modernity and the products of a globalizing economy."

MANY anthropologists have noticed that "traditional" healers in Africa are undergoing a strange process of mutation as the continent modernizes. Lots of them still wear traditional robes, carry staffs with ivory heads, and preside over smoke-filled huts surrounded by mud fetishes. But more and more of them are putting on lab coats, hanging certificates on the wall, selling their products in labeled bottles, or even administering injections. Green has documented the common practice of adding mashed-up ampicillin pills to "traditional" herbal medicines.

A perfect example of this sort of "weird amalgam" is Toudji-Bandje, the inventor of Tobacoak's. Toudji-Bandje, the secretary general of Togo's National Association of Traditional Healers, learned his herbal lore from his aged traditional-healer uncle. He also calls himself "Doctor." He has applied for a patent for Tobacoak's. He sends samples of his patients' blood to a laboratory in France to be tested for viral load. He has a catchy brand name for his product. And he calls it an "antiretroviral." Since when is "antiretroviral" a traditional African medical concept?

Toudji-Bandje's patients don't appear to care whether his theory of disease etiology is autochthonous, import, or creole. If anything, the mixture of North and South enables him to claim authority from both sources. What really matters to his patients is simply that someone is telling them he can cure their illness. And they believe the treatment works. "It completely eliminates my fever," says one patient, who declines to give his name. "When I take the medicine, I can eat. Whether it will cure me completely, I don't know. I haven't been taking it long enough."

"I tested positive in 1992," says a Mr. Kpodar, who claims to have been Toudji-Bandje's second AIDS patient. "I told my wife, and she tested positive too. I begged her to take Toudji-Bandje's medicine, but her family wouldn't let her. She died in 1993. The product saved my life." Toudji-Bandje claims that his remedy is effective in 86 percent of patients. But no third party has examined Toudji-Bandje's data, let alone conducted an independent study of his patients.

IN TOGO, AIDS is not yet completely out of control. But it's about to be. Togo's current rate of infection runs to 5.98 percent of adults aged fifteen to forty-nine, and a UNAIDS official confirms that HIV rates are rising. There have been active AIDS education and prevention programs in Togo since the late 1980s. But they don't seem to have had much effect.

"I've been trying to get traditional healers involved," says Bridget McHenry, a Peace Corps volunteer working in a village called Yometchin, in Togo's southern Maritime Region. "Some refuse. Some are psyched to do it. But most healers don't believe AIDS can't be cured. And they diagnose a lot of AIDS cases as the result of *gris-gris*."

Peace Corps volunteers in Togo are fairly pessimistic about the possibility of changing local sexual behavior, and they ascribe much of the blame to belief in *gris-gris*. But few of them know anything about *gris-gris*. They give the impression of being

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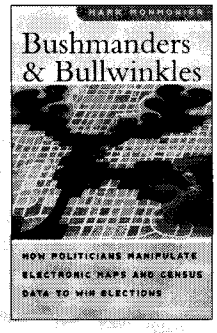
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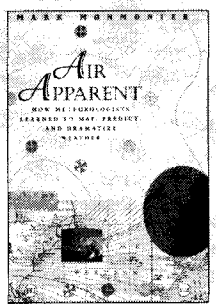

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lost in a culture they don't understand—precisely the situation Green thinks should be avoided. And if you ask them whether they think it would have been useful to have some training in traditional medical ideas before going into villages as AIDS educators, most say no.

"It's different in every village," says Kim Williams, a volunteer in a Plateau Region village called Akpakpakpe. "You have to really listen closely to understand it at all, and they think you're an idiot."

"And they know you're not one of them," adds McHenry. "They know you don't believe it. You'll always be *yovo*"—a foreigner.

Williams nods in agreement.

Each Peace Corps volunteer is paired with a *homologue,* or counterpart, from a local Togolese NGO or governmental agency. At a recent meeting, the *homologues* made it clear they're not interested in collaborating with traditional healers either.

"The healers say they can cure AIDS," says one *homologue.* "But of course they can't. They deceive people."

"They deny the disease exists," says another. "They say it's an old African sickness traditionally known as *dikanaku.* It's 'get-thin-and-die' in Ewe."

Although the WHO and UNAIDS are both developing programs directed toward traditional healers in Togo, the country's medical establishment regards traditional practitioners with ambivalence. On the one hand, there are doctors, like Hammad, who blame traditional healers for preventing Togolese from coming to terms with AIDS. But Messanvi Gbeassor, a biologist at Lomé's Université du Bénin, has good relations with healers. "We even work with their national association," he says. Gbeassor also carried out some tests on Toudji-Bandje's product, with tantalizingly positive results.

As for the Togolese government, its PNLS—Programme National de Lutte contre le SIDA—claims to have an active program for collaboration with traditional healers. If you try to find out more about this program, you will be directed to the PNLS headquarters, a spacious villa in a sleepy residential section of town. The building appears to be devoid of activity, other than the whir of air conditioners and a couple of boys out front listening to the radio. On the first floor, in a bare, grimy office, a small old man will deflect your questions repeatedly, and then, rummaging through the room's single cabinet, will at last come up with a copy of a statement of program goals from 1992, which announces the intention to hold training sessions with traditional healers.

IF YOU TRY TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE TOGOLESE GOVERNMENT'S AIDS PREVENTION PROGRAM, YOU WILL BE DIRECTED TO A BARE, GRIMY OFFICE, WHERE A SMALL OLD MAN WILL DEFLECT YOUR QUESTIONS REPEATEDLY.

If there is one single reason for Togo's lamentable performance in stopping HIV, it is illustrated in the condition of the PNLS. Unlike Uganda, Togo's government has not made an overwhelming political commitment to the struggle against AIDS. The president, General Gnassingbe Eyadema, has paid lip service to the cause, but he has not committed sufficient resources to it or made it a top priority. "What's lacking here," says Moustapha Sidatt, the WHO's resident representative in Togo, "is political will." Sidatt has an ambitious plan to establish a nationwide association of traditional practitioners, which would inspect their practices to determine that they are not harmful, and would issue membership cards backed by the government and the WHO.

Sidatt would also like to start testing the products of traditional healers who claim to treat AIDS or its associated oppor-

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tunistic infections. "We're trying to approach them, to gain their confidence," he says. "We have some laboratories here at the university, and virology laboratories abroad, which can test their products. There are many things we would like to do. But that requires a political decision from the government."

IF YOU DRIVE east on the highway from Lomé, toward Aneho and Ouidah, you will see little flags fluttering along the roadside in various colors. The flags are advertisements for traditional healers, and the different colors—white, green, black—symbolize the different practices available: herbal solutions, traditional vaccination (herbs inserted directly into cuts in the skin), sorcery, exorcism. Just a few miles outside of Lomé, you'll come upon the freshly painted clinic of Madame Léocadie Ashorgbor.

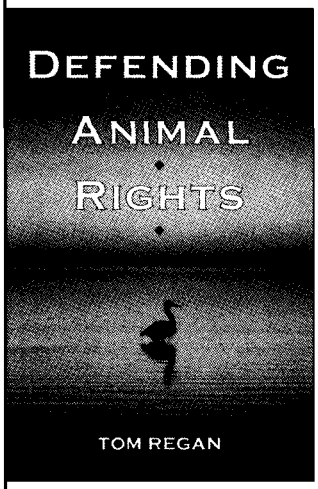
Ashorgbor provides herbal remedies. She learned them from her husband, from whom she is now estranged. She does not know where her husband trained, but some of the remedies are probably time-tested elements of Togolese culture. Still, her husband's recipes aren't all Ashorgbor relies on. "You have to have the gift," she says. "The gift comes from God." Ashorgbor doesn't heal through prayer, but the formulas for some of her herbal remedies come to her in revelations.

What would a medical anthropologist like Green make of Ashorgbor? Well, he would probably find her very interesting, but also a bit confusing. Can Western medicine collaborate with people like her to fight AIDS? If not, why not? "I don't claim working with traditional healers is easy," says Green. "I just think, looking at the public-health benefits, it's a good thing to do."

Ashorgbor agrees. "I think it's a good idea," she says of the WHO's initiative to organize Togo's traditional practitioners. "Depending on how it's done. You know, we traditional therapists are hard people to work with. We get all those herbs up in our heads, and we get a little bit crazy."

Matthew Steinglass is a writer based in Lomé, Togo. His article "Voices Carry: One More Paradigm Shift, and You'll Be Able to Tell Your Computer Everything" appeared in the July/August 2000 *LF*.

LIBERATION



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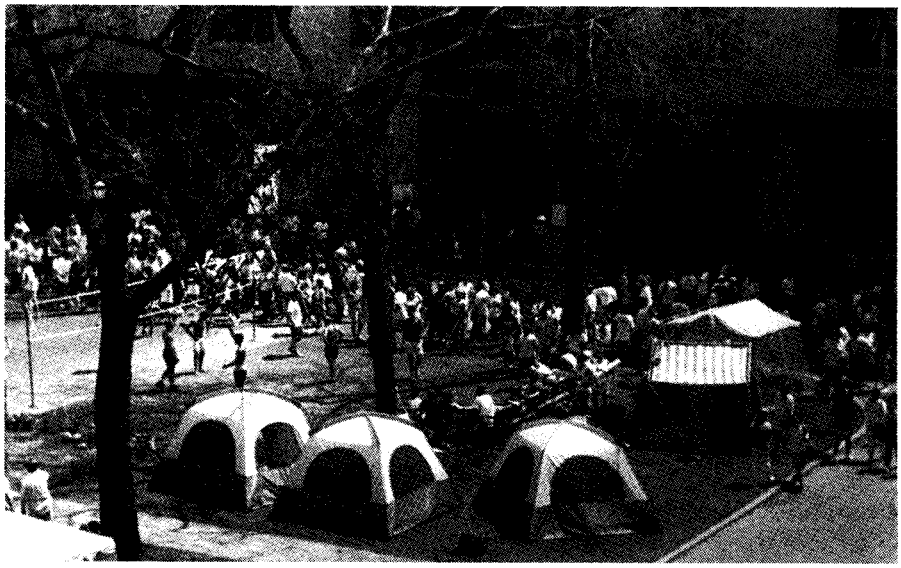
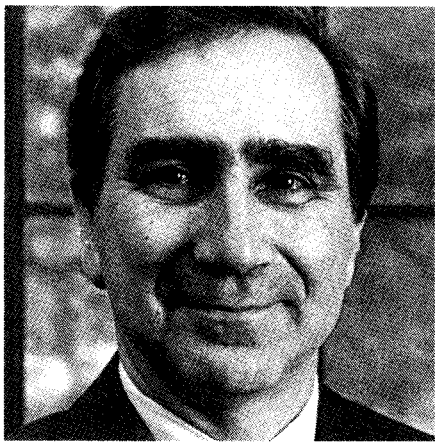
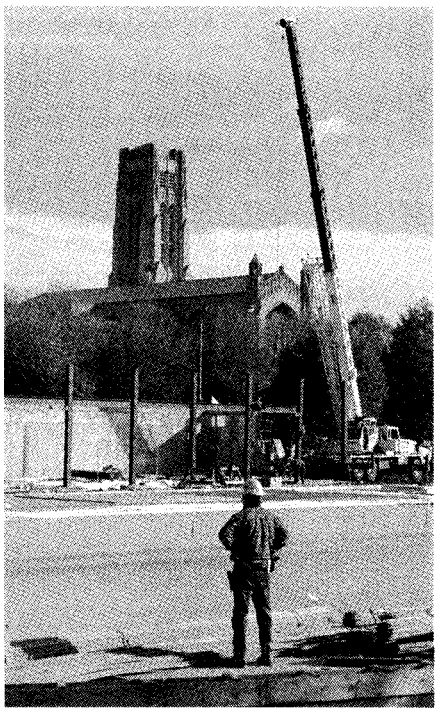
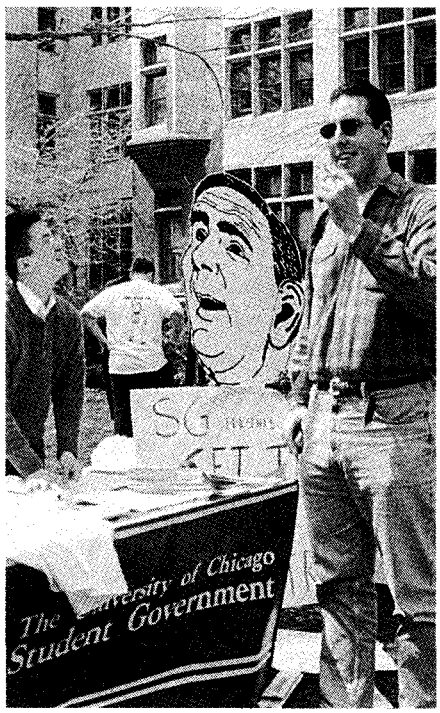




HURRICANE HUGO

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: HUGO SONNENSCHEIN; STUDENTS CONDUCT A "SLEEP OUT" ON THE QUAD, 1992; PROTESTERS STAGE A "FUN-IN" RALLY IN FRONT OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1999 (THREE PHOTOS); CONSTRUCTION IN HYDE PARK





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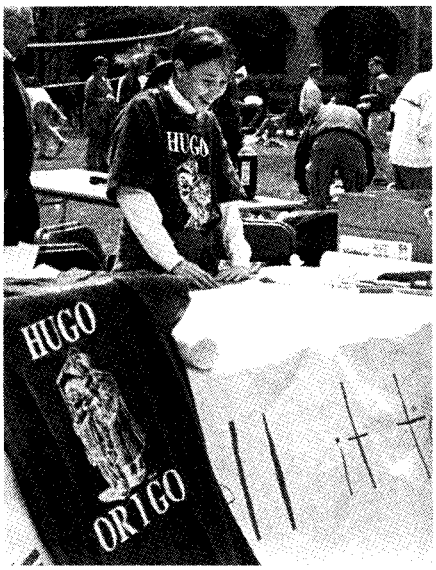

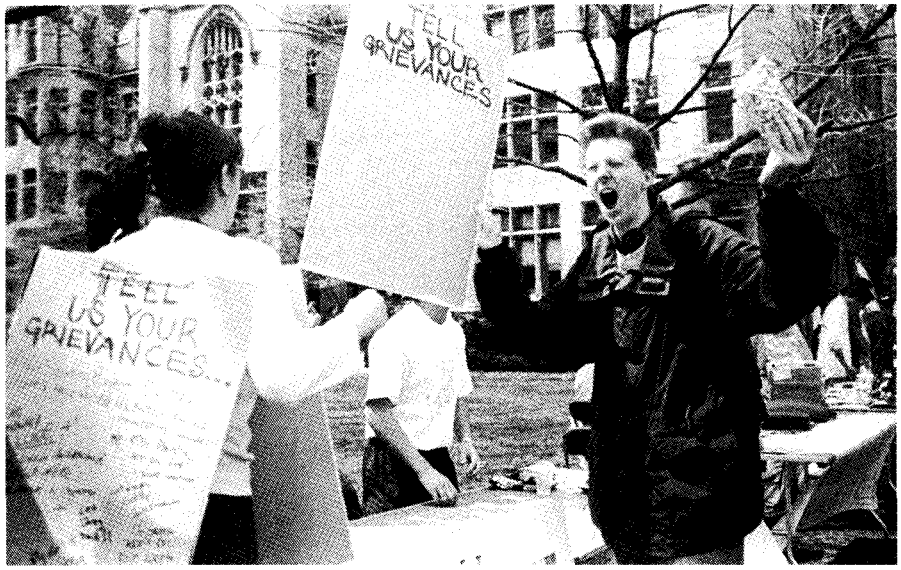

BY **DAVID L. KIRP**

FOLLOWING THE STORMY DEPARTURE OF ITS PRESIDENT,

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO RECONSIDERS HIS LEGACY

WINDS OF CHANGE RUSTLE THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO read the front-page headline in *The New York Times* on December 28, 1998. The article's lead paragraph was a publicist's dream—appropriately enough, since the story had been nursed into being by Al Chambers, a former Ford Motor Company flack hired by the university to help make over its image. "Ever since its creation on the South Side of Chicago in 1892 with a pile of Rockefeller money and a group of top-flight scholars," the story began, "no other academic institution has exemplified intellectual seriousness quite like the University of Chicago."

But the P.R. dream quickly turned nightmarish. The rest of the *Times* article dissected a university in the throes of an "identity crisis": Chicago was an institution with surprisingly few applicants, a high dropout rate, an endowment too modest for its pretensions, and a dreary, faux-Gothic campus that could use renovating. Worse still, the *Times* intimated that the school's fabled "cloistered approach to learning" was being undermined from within. The article quoted Michael Behnke, the vice president and associate dean of the college for enrollment, who doubted the timeworn Chicago assumption that many students "only seek the life of the mind." Even the school's president, Hugo Sonnenschein, who had arrived from Princeton in 1993, spoke matter-of-factly about a new academic order that was entirely alien to the denizens of Hyde Park—a world where students regarded themselves as consumers, not acolytes, and where the "commodification and marketing of higher education" weren't evils to be warded off but facts of life to be accepted.

The *Times* story was soon followed in other publications by other, even nastier articles about changes in the school, including a piece in the *Chicago Tribune* (AT U. OF C., the headline read, C STANDS FOR CHUCKLES). On campus, the media coverage added fuel to an already raging fire. Two major changes advocated by the Sonnenschein administration—shrinking the undergraduate college's famously demanding core curriculum and increasing the number of its students—had for some time been the subject of fierce debate among the faculty. On the heels of the *Times* story, the controversy escalated, as a public campaign was launched to preserve the school's intellectual heritage.

Ten academic ancients, icons such as Saul Bellow and David Riesman, inveighed against the administration's "dangerous" venture. "Making academic decisions on the basis of marketing," they wrote in an open letter to the trustees, "is itself a crime against the mind." In a separate letter to the trustees, seventy-four Chicago faculty members warned that "the intel-

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lectual tradition and academic organization of our university are being put at risk by its present leadership." A hastily formed alumni group decried the administration's plans for putting in "imminent danger" the "character of the entire University" and urged fellow alumni to withhold donations until the old order was restored. Chicago students, known to boast that Chicago is the school "where fun comes to die," organized a caustic "fun-in" rally to mock Sonnenschein's plans for making the university more attractive to prospective applicants. Protesters superimposed the president's face on a cardboard cutout of Darth Vader and on a T-shirt depicting a can of "University of Chicago Lite...specially brewed by the freshest consultants and coerced into its refreshing taste."

These critics believed that nothing less than the fate of the university was on the line. Chicago, they feared, would become a mere clone of Princeton—Nassau Street preppiness imported to the South Side—or another Northwestern. As the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins wrote: "They wanted to take the university out of University of Chicago"—turning Hyde Park into South Park. Sonnenschein's opponents summoned the spirit of the venerated Robert Hutchins, a longtime president of the university, who once declaimed that "when an institution determines to do something in order to get money it must lose its soul."

The issue was no less urgent for the administration, which argued that its proposals were necessary to preserve the school's overall quality. As Sonnenschein informed the faculty: "The course I am recommending is not without risk, but the greater risk is to remain on a course that will not sustain excellence."

These strongly held positions offered no room for compromise. "Everything became 'us versus them,'" observes Aleem Hossain, a student activist during the height of the controversy—"'promoting the best' versus 'killing the liberal arts.'"

Six months after the *Times* article, and just days before the 1999 commencement, Sonnenschein unexpectedly announced that he was resigning, effective a year later. The university, he told *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, needed someone who was "less a symbol of change." His antagonists were ecstatic. "Five more days," exulted sociologist Donald Levine, ex-dean of the college and perhaps its fiercest traditionalist, when I visited his cubbyhole office last summer. "Sonnenschein was the wrong president for the university," he said. "A crude misfit."

The president's numerous faculty supporters were far less vocal—as they had been throughout the controversy—and grudging in their praise. "He did what needed to be done," said Daniel Garber, a Chicago philosopher who served as associate provost for much of Sonnenschein's tenure. "But he didn't act elegantly. The analysis was right, but the practice was bungled."

ROBERT HUTCHINS: CAUTIONED THE UNIVERSITY NOT TO "LOSE ITS SOUL"

When Sonnenschein spoke of students as consumers and education as a commodity, he recited a fact of life: In higher education, as elsewhere, this is the new Gilded Age. But at Chicago, which exalts "the life of the mind" as a monastic ideal, the administration's focus on budgets and bottom lines was a sign of unwelcome worldliness. In one form or another, this deep divide, between those whose starting point is the reality of the marketplace and those whose guiding light is the community of scholars, affects every American university. But nowhere were the stakes higher, the terms of engagement more complex—and the ultimate outcome less certain—than at the University of Chicago.

WHEN HUGO Sonnenschein arrived at Chicago in 1993, expectations ran high. It was generally agreed that his predecessor, Hanna Gray, who had governed with Thatcherite imperiousness for fifteen years, had stayed on too long. Sonnenschein, an economist who had been Princeton's provost, seemed the perfect replacement. "He had standing as an academic, and he knew how to run a complex institution," recalls Howard Krane, a law school alumnus and State Street attorney who chaired the board of trustees. "Hugo eclipsed everyone in that search. When I met him I never looked back."

At the time, the university's finances were a mess. The budgeters projected a $55 million annual deficit by the end of the decade. Chicago had been in dire financial straits before—in the 1930s, the university almost had to merge with Northwestern, and as recently as the late 1950s it contemplated migrating to Palo Alto or Aspen. Once again, something had to be done to stanch the flow of red ink. Sonnenschein and his newly appointed provost, former law school dean Geoffrey Stone, imposed stringent cost-cutting measures: reducing faculty hires, increasing enrollment, cutting scholarship funds, and trimming administrative fat. Those actions won him few friends, but cut the projected deficit considerably.

Still, Chicago needed to do more than simply balance the books. Labs and libraries were outmoded, faculty salaries were not competitive, and dormitories were deteriorating badly. Its $1.5 billion endowment was smaller than those of its competitors. The verdict, says Provost Geoffrey Stone, was simple: "To be as good as we want to be, we need much more money than we have." In response, entrepreneurial deans launched lucrative new master's programs, including a course in financial mathematics for the "inside the Loop" bankers-and-brokers crowd, and certificate courses for social workers. Together with several other universities, Chicago signed up with UNext.com, a for-profit company that offers on-line business courses.

To strengthen the university financially and otherwise, the administration also hoped to recruit more and better undergraduates—"moving out the demand curve," as Sonnenschein puts it. During the 1990s, the number of applicants to

PREVIOUS SPREAD CLOCKWISE FROM SONNENSCHEIN: U. OF CHICAGO; CHRIS DAHLEN, CHICAGO MAROON.

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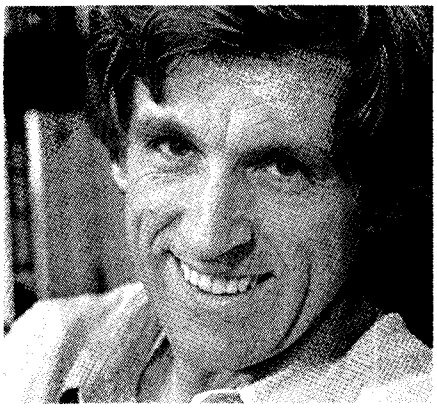
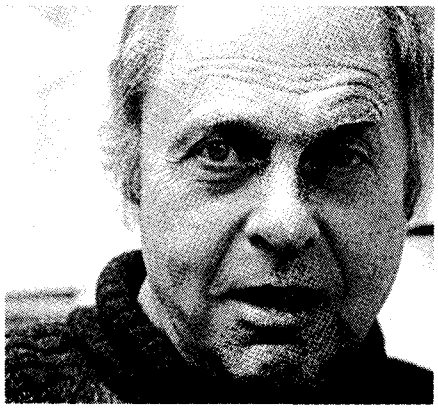
Chicago dropped, as did the school's standing in the influential *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. (It fell to fourteenth place.) Most astonishing, Chicago admitted nearly six in ten applicants for the Class of 2000. Some optimists attributed this to a self-selecting applicant pool, in which only those few who appreciated a grueling Chicago education applied. But this analysis was undermined by the facts: fewer than a third of those who were accepted in the Class of 2000 opted to enroll. Of course, Chicago was still attracting some of the nation's smartest youth—there were three Marshall scholars and one Rhodes scholar in the Class of 2000—but it also was an unhappy home for less academic types who had applied to Chicago as their "safety school." Equally troubling, one in six students left Chicago before graduating—by far the worst retention rate among prestigious universities.

ONLY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO IS THE IVY LEAGUE DESCRIBED AS THE LAND OF ACADEMIC "PHIL DONAHUISM" AND A RETIREMENT HOME FOR "DYING PROFESSORIAL ELEPHANTS."



ANDREW ABBOTT: THE ADMINISTRATION CONTAINED "NO REAL ACADEMICS"



MARSHALL SAHLINS: "THEY WANTED TO TAKE THE UNIVERSITY OUT OF U. OF C."

WHAT COULD be done to improve the enrollment picture? Al Chambers, the vice president for university relations, organized focus groups to test marketing ideas for making the school more appealing. Sonnenschein brought in consultants from McKinsey & Company to study the quality of student life. They found that students were unhappy and that alumni, though enthusiastic about their own education, were reluctant to put their children through the same grind. The unkindest cut was how little known the university was: Many prospective students confused it with the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois. To the administration, the implication was plain: Chicago needed to convey a different image. It might never be "fun," but it didn't have to be 357th—dead last—in a national survey of campus social life.

In April 1996, Sonnenschein sent an open letter to the faculty announcing that the university's financial woes necessitated a 25 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment. The student body would grow from thirty-six hundred students to forty-five hundred within a decade. Boosting undergraduate enrollment to balance the books—a plan Sonnenschein adopted despite the opposition of a task force he'd appointed two years earlier to consider the matter—marked the turning point in his tenure, for the move dramatically violated a long-standing Chicago credo: Small is beautiful.

To convey Chicago's ideal of intellectual intimacy, old hands lovingly tell the tale of an astrophysicist named Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar. In the 1940s, Chandrasekhar drove more than a hundred miles each week to teach a seminar to just two registered graduate students. In 1983, Chandrasekhar won a Nobel Prize in physics—twenty-six years after his two seminar students had each won their own Nobel Prizes. The legend captures the belief that what matters is quality, not numbers, and that concentrating on graduate students, not undergraduates, has produced more Nobel Prize winners at Chicago than at any other university in the world.

But despite the lesson of Chandrasekhar's story, the enrollment increase that Sonnenschein proposed was nothing new for Chicago. Every Chicago president from Robert Hutchins on has wanted more undergraduates in Hyde Park, and for the same reason: They bring in money. In the late 1960s, Edward Levi famously praised the virtues of a small college nestled in a research-dominated university, but privately he urged the trustees to double the number of undergraduates. A decade earlier, President Lawrence Kimpton recommended that the college expand to five thousand students. (As one trustee observed at the time, more students means more tuition from "cash customers" and "potent alumni donors.") Under Hanna Gray, the college quietly grew from twenty-eight hundred to thirty-four hundred students. Even Robert Hutchins, best remembered for his unwavering commitment to the college, calculated the dollars-and-cents advantages of enrolling squadrons of undergraduates.

Though past presidents had hidden their expansionist ambitions, Sonnenschein and Stone made their budget projections public in the hope that transparency would elicit faculty understanding and support. "There should be some benefit in having people look at data clearly and be straight about it," Sonnenschein says. "This isn't just the president's responsibility."

But Sonnenschein had misread Chicago's culture. By the time he'd decided to increase undergraduate enrollment, his first round of cost cutting, espe-

ABBOT: U. OF CHICAGO; SAHLINS: PATRICIA EVANS/U. OF CHICAGO

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CHICAGO STUDENTS, EAGER TO ENROLL IN POPULAR CLASSES, "SLEEP OUT" ON THE STEPS OF HARPER LIBRARY, 1992

CHRIS DAHLEN/CHICAGO MAROON

cially the reduction in hiring, had already left scars. Faculty skeptics worried that Sonnenschein had a wholesale makeover of the university in mind. Talk of closing down the education department—the department associated with John Dewey—only intensified their fears. Only later did Provost Stone fully realize that "to focus on finances was to see the university as something other than a 'pure' institution whose sole value was academic excellence."

Critics also worried about the kind of students that Chicago might pursue in its quest to enlarge the student body. Sociologist Andrew Abbott trashed the McKinsey report—which had questioned the school's preference for scholarly workaholics—as shoddy research that implicitly treated Chicago's virtues as marketing problems. But the administration ignored Abbott's own, more rigorously designed survey, which offered a far more positive depiction of students' attitudes.

Sonnenschein's open letter to the faculty thus signaled the escalation of an epic battle of the budget. "If you put every straining dollar into maintaining an arts-and-sciences faculty that's larger than Harvard's, with half as many students," Sonnenschein pointed out, "that's a tough way to run a ship." In response, professors looked longingly, if unrealistically, to the professional schools to make up the deficit, while others denied that there was anything to worry about. "The question is not where we rank" in terms of endowment, Marshall Sahlins argued in the *Free Press,* a campus monthly, "but whether we have enough to meet our intellectual goals." The geophysicist Frank Richter, who recognizes that his own labs could use better funding, argued that merely adding more undergraduates wouldn't generate nearly enough revenue to solve the university's problems.

In the end, Sonnenschein's enrollment proposal was adopted over the objections of many faculty members. Three years later, when a TV interviewer asked Sonnenschein to explain his decision, he denied that money had had anything to do with it. Understandably, no one believed him.

EVEN SOME of Sonnenschein's closest allies admit that he had a tin ear for Chicago's soundtrack. The school is as self-obsessed as any institution of higher learning in America. Three quarters of the professors live within a mile of the campus in the enclave of Hyde Park, a hothouse of learned chatter and salacious gossip set apart from the bombed-out landscape that surrounds it. That isolation, it's said only half-jokingly, explains why the university's athletic teams are called the Maroons.

The Chicago tribe writes endlessly about itself, in student newspapers, in histories and biographies, in faculty committee reports, broadsheets, and Web sites. Its animating myth was manufactured seventy years ago by Robert Hutchins, the institution's promoter nonpareil. "This is not just a very good university," Hutchins proclaimed, "it is the best university in the world." Nowhere else is "the Ivy League" a term of derision—the land of academic "Phil Donahuism," and a retirement home for "dying [professorial] elephants," as Abbott dismissed it in a 1996 essay, "Futures of the University."

In the increasingly poisonous campus climate, not even the administration's most seemingly innocuous moves escaped criticism. Critics assailed the new viewbook (publicity material sent to prospective applicants) because of its slick appearance: The color photos and the attention paid to sports and drinking seemed to appeal to the unserious student. They derided improvements in the placement office as a concession to vocationalism: Silicon Valley and Wall Street recruiters were practically being invited, critics thought, to steal the best young

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minds. Sonnenschein's opponents even found fault with the decision to build a new swimming pool—the old pool had been used by athletes preparing for the 1908 Olympics.

Admittedly, these detractors had reason for concern—reforms of the scope that Sonnenschein and Stone were initiating carry their own dangers. And many felt that Sonnenschein's brusque manner left something to be desired. According to Richard Saller, dean of social sciences, the administration failed "to convey a respect for the faculty's experience or their views." At one faculty gathering Sonnenschein casually tossed out the possibility of a grade-free freshman year to ease the pressure on students—proof, in the eyes of some, that the president believed in coddling students. "It's controversial at Chicago," Sonnenschein says, "to say that students have to feel we're dedicated to their success."

As the fights dragged on, everything turned personal. Blunders became known as "Hugo-isms" and Sonnenschein's rhetoric as "Hugolish." Adam Kissel, a graduate student serving as the student representative to the trustees, asked: "Can we criticize these guys this hard, in public, without destroying any respect for them as human beings?" Others were less troubled by the ad hominem jabs. Abbott bemoans the fact that during the Sonnenschein years "there were no real academics on the Fifth Floor," as the administration offices are commonly called—though his claim implicitly dismisses the intellectual bona fides of Sonnenschein, an economist who is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Stone, who is a distinguished constitutional law scholar. Certainly Sonnenschein didn't win over professors in the classic way, flattering them for their work—it wasn't apparent that he'd even read any of their work. The old jibe was recycled: Sonnenschein is the economist who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

IN CHICAGO'S Spartan academic environment, the intellectual centerpiece—and Hutchins's proudest legacy—is the common core curriculum. Once the faculty perceived that Sonnenschein would insist on altering it, his standing rapidly eroded.

REVENGE OF THE NERDS

The University of Chicago is not the only prestigious school to have considered expanding its undergraduate enrollment. Princeton also has a plan to admit additional students. But Princeton's goal is very different from Chicago's: to lure a greater number of intellectuals—especially those interested in the arts and humanities—and dilute its otherwise enviable concentration of overachieving student-athlete types.

In January 2000, a committee of Princeton trustees recommended expanding the student body over several years from forty-six hundred to fifty-one hundred students—almost the size of Yale. Princeton is now almost ludicrously selective, the committee noted, admitting just 12 percent of applicants last year, down from about 40 percent in the 1950s. (Among the Ivies, only Harvard is as selective; Cornell, the least selective, admits 33 percent.) The committee contended that an enrollment increase would allow the university to tap into a deep pool of desirable applicants who are currently being turned away merely for want of space.

The Princeton committee wants to add more students, but it does not want more of the same kind it already has. It may seem counterintuitive, but many at Princeton think that their highly selective school has too few students dedicated to the arts and the life of the mind. The reason for this is that Princeton fills a large percentage of its very few slots with students who, though unquestionably bright, are not being selected solely for their commitment to their intellect.

Consider: According to the recent book *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values* (Princeton), an astonishing 22 percent of male students at Princeton are varsity athletes, who get preferential treatment in admissions. (In general, Ivy League universities have more sports teams than other schools. Princeton has roughly 540 male varsity athletes, making up 22 percent of male enrollment; the University of Michigan, by contrast, has only 362 male athletes, a mere 3 percent of its male students.) The university also privileges applicants who are traditional affirmative-action candidates and children of alumni. Students in any of these groups may happen to be devoted intellectuals—but that is not the primary reason for their selection. With a smaller freshman class than most Ivies, Princeton is simply juggling too many competing demands to accommodate nonminority, nonlegacy brainiacs who lack ferocious backhands.

The Princeton committee has essentially proposed that the 125 new slots per year be reserved for nonathletes. "Because the number of student athletes is determined by the Ivy League–mandated size of varsity programs," the committee report reasons, "this category is not expected to grow" if more students are admitted. To attract the type of student it wants, Princeton has introduced an outreach program. Last fall, the school flew nearly seventy outstanding high-school students to the campus to participate in sample courses taught by professors like Anthony Grafton, the Renaissance historian, and Michael Cadden, the director of Princeton's program in theater and dance.

Extra admissions slots may also help with another embarrassing issue at Princeton: a falloff in Jewish enrollment. Whereas at least a quarter of the students at both Yale and Harvard are Jewish, the proportion of Jewish students at Princeton has dropped from 18 to 10 percent since the early 1980s. It seems that Jewish applicants are relatively unlikely to fall under any of the categories that receive extra attention during Princeton's admissions process.

Princeton's full slate of trustees will take up the committee's proposal this month, but the plan's supporters should proceed with caution: The athletics lobby is powerful. Even the famously cerebral Swarthmore ran into opposition when, citing admissions concerns, it killed its football program last December. Swarthmore trustee and former National Football League president Neil Austrian was even quoted in *The New York Times* accusing nonathlete students of apathy: "They don't give back," he said. "They are just passing through."

—Christopher Shea

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"How many core courses?" was the question at the heart of the public debate, a numbers game in which it was tacitly assumed that "more" meant "better." Interestingly, Chicago's common core has changed repeatedly in the past, expanding and contracting to fit the intellectual season. Those changes have invariably been shaped by sharp-edged political negotiations, carried out by professors with their own ideas—and turf—to defend. "It's the custom," says John Boyer, the dean of the college, "to have stirring fights over the curriculum."

During the donnybrook over the core, many professors, like historian George Chauncey, author of the acclaimed *Gay New York,* favored a smaller core; the existing requirements, Chauncey told me, didn't give students "enough freedom to explore their own interests, even to put together a good undergraduate major." Nearly a third of all undergraduates, desperate to take courses that captured their interest, were postponing some requirements until senior year, undermining the intellectual aim of the enterprise. Students

PROVOST STONE: DENIES FACULTY WAS FORCED TO ALTER THE CORE

already fluent in a second language resented having to sit through a year of instruction. Unhappiness with the content of the required courses was also widespread. The science courses are "in disarray," complained the former master of the biological science collegiate division. "Faculty are unsure what to teach, or why, and students are too often apathetic, if not hostile to their common core biology courses." There were easy pathways through hard science, courses like "Rocks for Jocks" and "Physics for Poets" that belied the rigor that the core was meant to represent.

The debate over general education also became hostage to the culture wars, as campus Tories assailed what they called "bizarre electives." As philosopher Daniel Garber says: "Shakespeare was out, gay studies was in, and the faculty traditionalists weren't pleased." Senior Aleem Hossain opted for his own separate peace. As he wrote in the *Maroon,* he had argued strenuously for maintaining the core, but its overzealous defenders had driven him away by arguing "that movies, lesbians, Cubans, and jazz had no place in a U of C education."

Those who fought against changing the curriculum refused to confront the inconvenient truth: The real threat to general education came not from the Fifth Floor but from the faculty itself, which had in practice given up on the project

MATTHEW GILSON/U OF CHICAGO

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"IT'S CONTROVERSIAL AT CHICAGO," SONNENSCHEIN SAYS, "TO SAY STUDENTS HAVE TO FEEL WE'RE DEDICATED TO THEIR SUCCESS."

years earlier. Despite the rhetoric of Hyde Park exceptionalism used by the core's defenders, science courses were taught lecture style, as in most universities, with few section leaders drawn from the regular faculty; in math classes, sections were led by upperclassmen. Even in the social sciences, as Richard Saller points out, nearly two thirds of the instructors are graduate students and teachers who aren't on the tenure ladder. Chicago psychologist Bertram Cohler observes, "the traditionalists kept saying, 'What we're doing has intellectual integrity!' But you can only go so far before you have to point to the faculty and ask: 'Why aren't you teaching?'"

These unspoken realities made for decidedly odd bedfellows among defenders of the core. Donald Levine, for whom general education is a passion, found himself in rare agreement with Marshall Sahlins, who prefers teaching graduate students. "I'm not a College type," Sahlins said to me—an understatement, since he identifies himself as a member of the "graduate department" of anthropology.

"The contradiction we're trying to resolve," says Richard Saller, "is that we don't want to be Harvard or Yale, and use the large-lecture format. We want to do as much as possible in small classes—but we can't do this with tenured faculty." The irony is palpable: At a university where devotion to general education is a watchword, it's increasingly hard to find professors willing to teach core classes.

An initial proposal to limit the core to a single year of courses met resistance in 1996 from the College Council. But the matter didn't end there. A group of faculty and administrators—the so-called Friday Group—was charged with reviewing the curriculum once again. According to a later Op-Ed by Andrew Abbott, two associate provosts told the group that the administration wanted the core reduced to a "year of less work." Abbott's charge was pointed: Responsibility for the curriculum was supposed to rest with the faculty, but the faculty was being pressured. Provost Stone vigorously denied Abbott's accusation—"That was never the position of anybody in the administration, that the college had to do this."

Eventually, faculty members hammered out a compromise that trimmed but did not slash the core. Three courses out of twenty-one were cut, and the language requirement was sensibly reframed in terms of competency rather than seat time. In 1998, the College Council overwhelmingly approved the compromise. Advocates of a somewhat smaller core, the George Chaunceys, had been largely invisible during the debate, but they appeared to be more representative of faculty attitudes than vocal antagonists of change, the Donald Levines.

Peace seemed to have been restored. But it was a cold peace, and hostilities resumed in 1999, with the tsunami of media attacks in the *Times,* the *Tribune,* and elsewhere. War had broken out again, and gallons of ink were spilled over a proposal whose scope had already been significantly reduced by compromise.

SONNENSCHEIN abruptly resigned in June of 1999. The suddenness of his departure prompted rumors that he had been pushed out. The faculty missive to the trustees; the screed of Bellow, Reisman, and the rest of the pantheon; the student "fun-in"; the endless tomes generated on the campus; the threats voiced by up-in-arms alumni—all these seemed to have done their job. For his part, Bertram Cohler adds: "It was believed that the trustees leaked information about President Sonnenschein's resignation before it was announced to the public." But when I talked with Howard Krane, chairman of the board of trustees, a somewhat different story emerged. "Hugo submitted his resignation and the board didn't ask him to reconsider."

Whatever version of events one accepts, Sonnenschein had clearly outrun his mandate. "When I told the trustees I was leaving, they felt it was probably time," he said when we talked this winter, shortly after he'd finished teaching an economics seminar at Princeton. "For some trustees, the amount of confrontation with the press was too much. They preferred to live in a world where you're doing what's right and it's easier."

In the fall of 2000, a new, though quintessentially Chicago, tradition was inaugurated—an ongoing faculty seminar whose title, "The Idea of the University," evokes Cardinal Newman's classic defense of liberal arts education. Donald Levine kicked off the series with a jeremiad against "the tyranny of the bottom line," an unsubtle reminder that the war against Sonnenschein isn't over. Who needs money? he seemed to ask. But though the monk's life may be fine for sociologists like Levine, it doesn't meet the needs of the psychologists who, until Sonnenschein brought in funds to underwrite a new biopsychology program, had inadequate labs. This January, Hanna Gray, whose stock on campus rose dramatically during the time of troubles, served up a familiar account of the millennium-long history of higher learning. The one time the *Maroon* mentioned Cardinal Newman, Gray noted, it referred without apparent irony to "Carmen Newman and the Ides of the University." How far must the good cleric be from students' academic concerns?

The new president, Don Michael Randel, will present a paper to the seminar this spring. No one expects fireworks, as nothing resembling fireworks has emanated from the Fifth Floor since he became president last summer. Randel, formerly provost at Cornell University and a Renaissance music scholar, was selected in part because, in style at least, he isn't Hugo Sonnenschein. "The search committee fell in love with him," says trustee Howard Krane. "He's a plainspoken guy, and there was a desire to find someone a little different" from Sonnenschein.

Certainly Randel speaks the faculty's language and is attuned to its values. But it's unrealistic to anticipate, as some do, that Randel will repeal Sonnenschein's ini-

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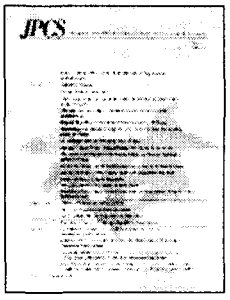

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tiatives. As he told the *Maroon*, "there's not going to be a sort of violent change in direction or some big declaration that announces some radically different strategy." Marshall Sahlins's fear is quite the reverse—that Sonnenschein's legacy will be solidified. "I haven't seen the president. Where is he? The guy has inherited a structure and a plan, which he is there to execute, then he can return to his house in Cornell where he has his heart and thirty years of his life."

Sahlins has a habit of baiting Chicago's presidents. In 1979, barely a year after Hanna Gray's inauguration, he assailed her, in the words of a *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter, as "beholden to conservative economic interests and inclined to keeping the lid on, both politically and intellectually." New president, same old song. But Sahlins is clearly right about one thing: Although Hugo Sonnenschein may have lost the personal battle, he has won the war, for all his priorities are firmly in place. Already there are five hundred more undergraduates, and by the standard metrics, SATs and class rank, they're better qualified. An energetic recruiting effort has made the university more visible, and for all the right reasons. A *Newsweek* reporter spent a year in the admissions office, and his cover story for the magazine was a puff piece—"the best publicity since the chain reaction," one student quipped.

Sonnenschein's reforms are taking hold on both sides of the budget ledger. An aggressive fund-raising campaign and the booming stock market more than doubled the university's endowment, to $3.5 billion, during his tenure. There's no more talk of a budget "crisis"; instead, graduate fellowships are being increased so that Chicago can compete for the best Ph.D.s. Even as the faculty is shrinking slightly, edging closer to the student-faculty ratio of comparable universities, faculty salaries are rising. Meanwhile, undergraduate "discussion" classes are bigger, and in such subjects as economics, the fastest-growing major, graduate assistants and part-timers do most of the teaching.

All's quiet on the curricular front. Last year, when students could choose between the old core and the new, most opted for the new, with its fewer requirements. (Being Chicago undergraduates, and so

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gluttons for work, many are doing a second major rather than taking more electives.) There are more paying M.B.A. and law students, as well as a continuing spate of new profit-generating master's programs. The trustees approved a $500 million master plan, which includes money for new science buildings, dormitories, a parking garage, and a sports complex. The telltale scars of construction are already visible. Still, as Richard Saller points out, during the past decade the financial gap between Chicago and the super-rich schools like Harvard and Yale has widened. "We're at a competitive disadvantage, more than ever." In higher education, a fund-raiser's work is never done.

Sonnenschein's antagonists are hardly quiescent. Some are especially displeased with the new campus architecture. The university built "dormitories encircling and imprisoning the library," Marshall Sahlins said to me. "Instead of expanding the library. This is a Gothic campus that is differentiated, architecturally and otherwise, from what surrounds it. What matters"—in more ways than one—"is the integrity of the campus."

And so the debate continues in vintage Chicago fashion. David Levine appreciates that reliance on the values of the marketplace is "not an isolated phenomenon"—not just a Chicago story but "a nationwide trend." But for him that provides cold comfort.

Sonnenschein, of course, sees things differently. "It's unimaginable," he told me, "that the truth won't be good, in the end." A few years from now, Sonnenschein may be hailed for having saved a great university from financial disaster—and, worse, irrelevance—dragging it by brute force into modern times. But the ultimate question is whether what partisans refer to as the soul of the institution, its singularity, will survive—and perhaps be made stronger because of—this transformation. If it doesn't, the University of Chicago will become just a second-rate Ivy.

David L. Kirp is professor of public policy at the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley, and author of *Almost Home: America's Love-Hate Relationship with Community* (Princeton). He is currently writing a book on higher education in the age of money.

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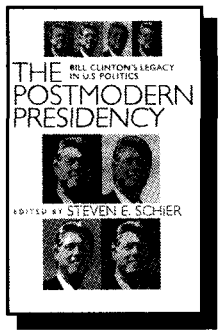

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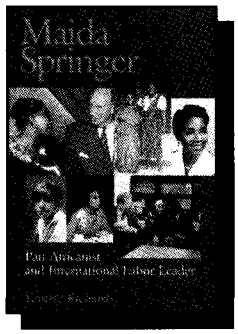

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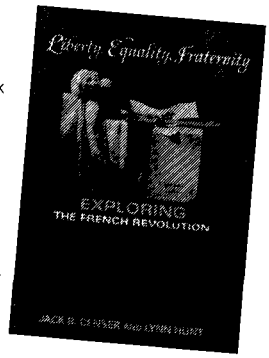

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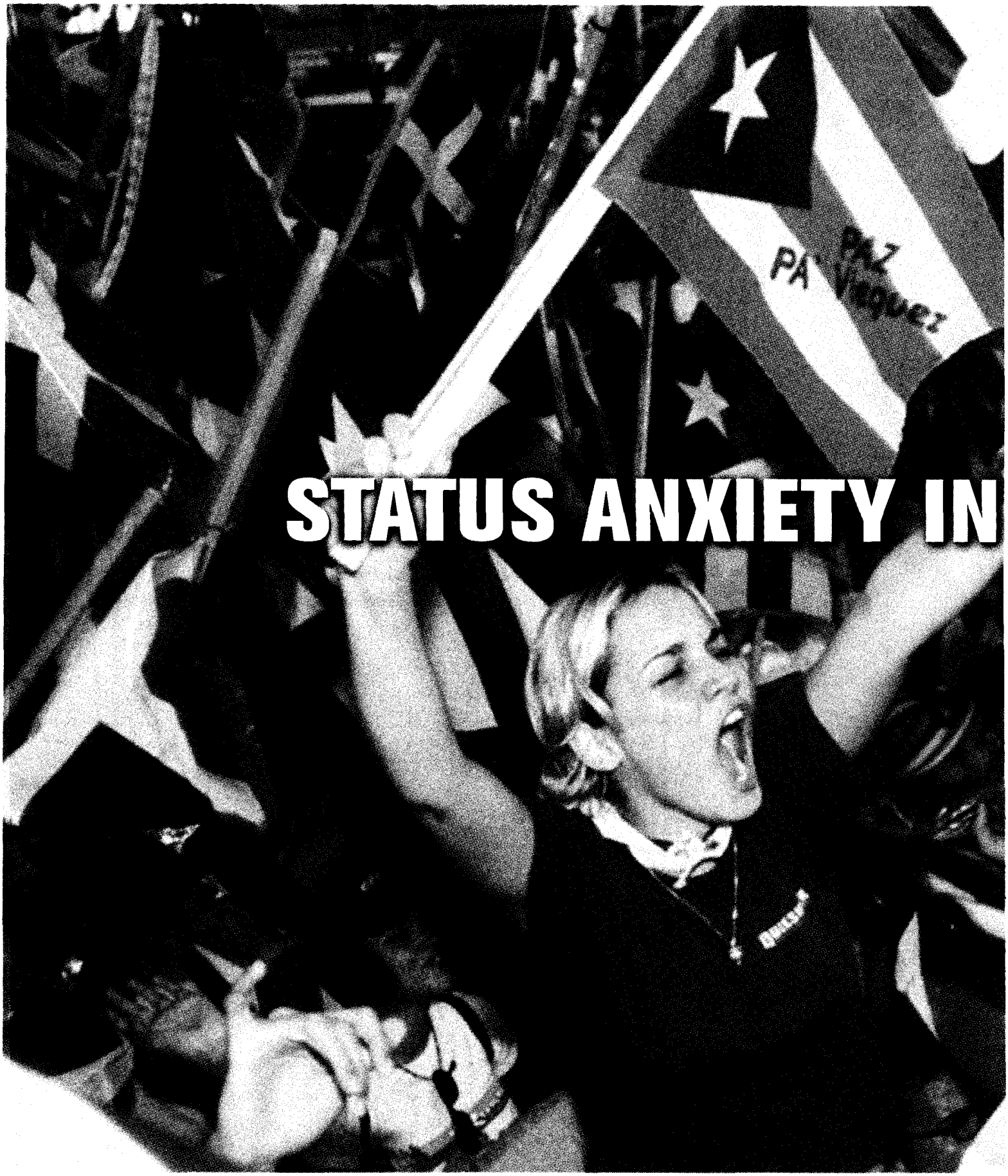

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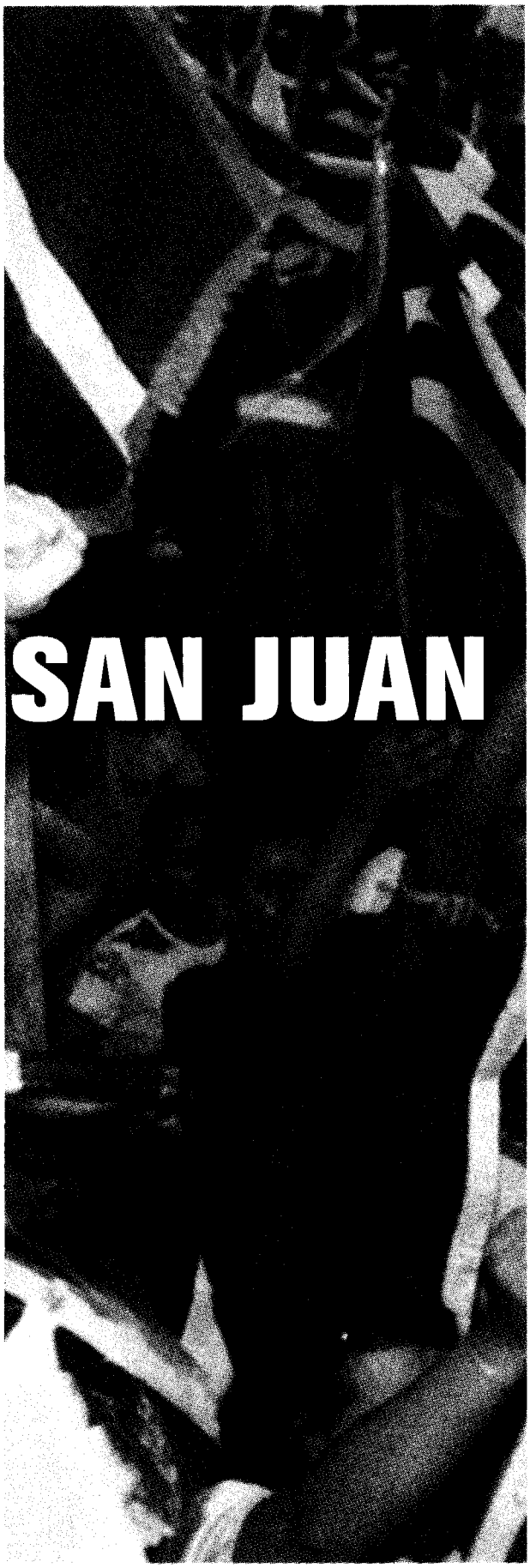

SUPPORTERS OF THE PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE PARTY

LEFT-WING ADVOCATES OF PUERTO RICAN STATEHOOD COME UNDER FIRE FROM ALL SIDES

BY **CHRIS MOONEY**

"POR FIN TE TENEMOS, POSTMODERNO SUCIO." FINALLY WE GOT YOU, you dirty postmodernist.

Juan Duchesne heard a female voice shout these words as he came to the defense of his wife and colleague, Aurea María Sotomayor, in her darkened classroom. A group of student strikers had disrupted the exam Sotomayor was administering, pushing her students out the door and overturning all the desks. They'd fixed Sotomayor in the spotlights of their video cameras, with portable loudspeakers blaring. "Some twenty people were screaming obscenities, slurs, and threats," Duchesne recalls by e-mail. ROMPE HUELGA— strikebreaker—the students scrawled on her chalkboard. ¡VENDE CULO! You sold your ass.

It was May 5, 2000, and strikers were shutting down the University of Puerto Rico's central Río Piedras campus to protest the U.S. Navy's use of the island of Vieques as a bombing range. Still, Sotomayor wasn't the only professor teaching during the strike. She'd even offered her striking students a makeup exam. What's more, like most Puerto Rican intellectuals, Duchesne and Sotomayor oppose the navy's presence in Vieques.

So why the student antipathy? For one thing, Duchesne and Sotomayor, both professors in UPR's Spanish department, are notorious for questioning the concept of a distinctive Puerto Rican nation, a stance that often pits them against professors and students of more nationalist, or *puertorriqueñista*, leanings. And not only that: Among Puerto Rican academics, they have committed what may be the cardinal sin. They have suggested that Puerto Rico—a U.S. territory since 1898 and home to nearly four million Spanish-speaking, nonvoting citizens—should have its star as the union's fifty-first state.

Puerto Rican statehood is not a new idea, but its supporters have traditionally hailed from the island's pro-business political right. Few professed "statehooders" inhabit Puerto Rico's left-leaning campuses, where intellectuals much more frequently favor independence. Duchesne and Sotomayor have upset that dynamic, arguing that Puerto Ricans need not choose between wholesale assimilation with the United States, on the one hand, and fiercely protective nationalism, on the other. Rather, drawing on postmodernist theory, they claim that Puerto Rico's

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cultural identity does not hinge on the island's political status. And they reject other political stereotypes as well—arguing that one can marry the left's pacifist, pro-labor, and environmentalist politics with an appeal for incorporation into the United States. In making such a case, they have not only maddened their colleagues. They've thrown a wrench into Puerto Rican status politics.

JUAN DUCHESNE is the kind of bilingual speaker who can lull you into thinking his English is only so-so and then say something verging on the lyrical. By phone from Puerto Rico, he explains that what irks his colleagues most about his endorsement of the statehood option is that it comes from a left-wing perspective: "They would be very happy if I would say, Okay, I confess, I'm a rightist, I'm a pro-American imperialist.... They would be very happy with me. They would even start to say hello again."

But as I learn when I meet Duchesne at El hipopótamo—a Río Piedras dive where you can get a table without ordering anything—his leftist credentials are impeccable. In 1974, Duchesne spent three months in Cuba at a seminar on revolutionary tactics; for more than fifteen years, he was a radical activist for Puerto Rican independence in the now-defunct Marxist-Leninist socialist party. He was part of "the movement" when, in 1969, Vietnam-protesting UPR students burned down the ROTC headquarters and later banished the program from campus. (Though Puerto Ricans can't vote for president, they can be drafted.) But by the 1980s, Duchesne felt, Puerto Rican nationalism had lost the subversive content it had incorporated in the 1960s and 1970s—feminism, socialism, the sexual revolution. Instead, it had become traditionalist: terrified of assimilation and dedicated to policing the culture to protect against impurities from the United States. The threat of U.S. domination lurked in everything from Santa Claus (Puerto Ricans traditionally celebrate Three Kings Day) to cable television and the English language. In fact, as Duchesne and I talk at El hipopótamo, yet another impurity comes across the airwaves: Bon Jovi's ballad "Never Say Goodbye."

In 1997, Juan Duchesne broke dramatically with his pro-independence past. Together with five other formerly pro-independence scholars, he published a manifesto titled "Statehood From a Radical-Democratic Perspective" in UPR's monthly newspaper, *Diálogo*. (Sotomayor, who supports independence, signed the document to make a statement against dogmatic nationalism.) The radical statehooders presented a distinctly left-wing case against independence: They argued that as a sovereign republic in a U.S.-dominated global system, Puerto Rico, which is twice as poor as Mississippi, would simply swap de jure political colonialism for de facto economic enslavement to global markets and political elites. Representation in the U.S. Congress, on the other hand, could give Puerto Ricans more control over their fate than they would enjoy if they were represented in the legislature of a poor Caribbean nation (which might even succumb to a Castro-style dictatorship). The manifesto also expressed the hope, founded on demographic predictions of an ever-diversifying United States, that as a state Puerto Rico could help forge a "multiracial, multicultural, democratic, pacifist, and internationalist...Nuestra América."

One commentator at the time called the manifesto "a very stimulating and creative exercise in ideological sabotage." But critics quickly dubbed "radical statehood" an oxymoron and accused the radicals of attacking the left from within. It would be all too easy to overestimate the United States's democratic goodwill toward Puerto Rico, the detractors cautioned. After all, the last thing U.S. Republicans want is the overwhelmingly Democratic Puerto Rico electing two senators and at least six congressmen. Perhaps that's why a 1998 bill to create a binding referendum on Puerto Rico's future had to dodge a GOP "English-only" amendment in the House of Representatives, and was then quashed by Trent Lott and Don Nickles in the Senate. Were the radicals really so naive about the United States? Or were they simply traditional statehooders speaking the sophisticated language of postmodernism?

As intellectual provocation, the manifesto was certainly a success. Writers in *Diálogo* hotly debated radical statehood for several months, and the pro-independence weekly *Claridad* attacked it regularly for a year. Meanwhile, manifesto signer Ramón Grosfoguel, a Boston College sociologist, expanded on the radical-statehood idea in his column for the newspaper *El nuevo día*. Together with Frances Negrón Muntaner, another signer, Grosfoguel also published *Puerto Rican Jam* (Minnesota, 1997), an English-language collection of cultural criticism, arguing that nationalism was far from the only antidote to colonialism. In fact, wrote the book's editors, nationalism might not really be of much help at all—for though it "often refers to ethnic culture and solidarity strategies," it rarely entails "a mass demand to administer the chaos left behind by five hundred years of colonial and neocolonial relations."

THE RADICAL STATEHOODERS WARN THAT PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE WOULD MEAN SWAPPING POLITICAL COLONIALISM FOR ECONOMIC ENSLAVEMENT TO GLOBAL MARKETS.

PUERTO RICO, writes the island's former chief justice José Trías Monge, is "the oldest colony in the modern world." The claim is hard to dispute. Before 1898, the island was a Spanish possession for four centuries. And in the 103 years since troops hoisted the U.S. flag at the southern Puerto Rican town of Guánica during the Spanish-American War, nothing fundamental has changed. True, Puerto Ricans have been granted U.S. citizenship, the right to elect their own governor, and a statelike commonwealth administration. But the island remains a U.S. territory, subject to federal laws devised in chambers from which Puerto Rican representatives are all but excluded. Puerto Ricans are not, by any stretch, governed by their consent.

It's no surprise, then, that for the last century, Puerto Rican politics has cen-

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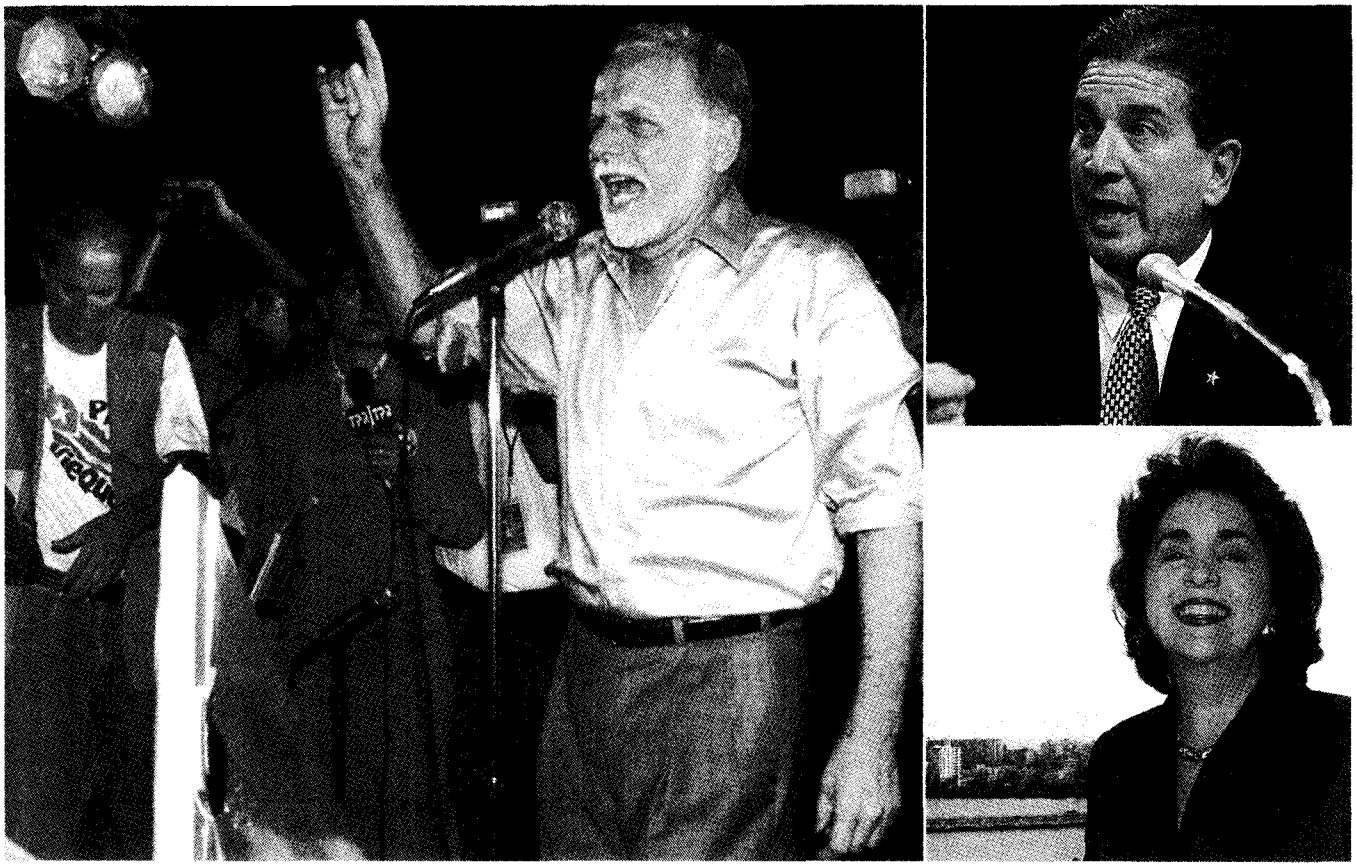
tered on the island's status. Would the territory remain a commonwealth, gain independence, or become a state? Shortly after Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States, the first statehooders embraced American institutions and aspired to join the new nation as equals. But as it became clear that full democratic rights would not extend to Puerto Ricans (see sidebar, p. 54), anti-American sentiment smoldered. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party converged around the Harvard-educated orator Pedro Albizu Campos, who eventually advocated Puerto Rico's liberation by violent means. Albizu's followers would later shoot up the U.S. Congress and try to assassinate Harry Truman. In the 1970s, an *albizuista*-style militancy also fueled the Puerto Rican nationalist FALN, several of whose members were jailed for terrorism until the Clinton administration offered them clemency in 1999.

Uncritical love and violent hatred—both directed toward the United States—mark the two extremes of Puerto Rican politics. But the leading approach to colonial power, advanced by Puerto Rico's Popular Democratic Party (PPD), is more compromising. In the 1940s, under the leadership of the legendary Luis Muñoz Marín, the PPD swept into power on a platform of economic modernization through industrialization. As Puerto Rico's first elected governor, Muñoz advocated putting off the status question. He worked both with U.S. politicians and with independence supporters, whose nationalist stance he partly humored and partly co-opted. In 1952, Congress created the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which Muñoz headed upon his reelection. Since then, Puerto Rican statehooders and *independentistas* have attacked the arrangement, accusing the centrist PPD of trying to gift wrap colonialism.

Today, three rival political parties split the Puerto Rican vote. The pro-statehood and pro-business New Progressive Party (PNP) is the furthest right, though it tends more toward fiscal than social conservatism (the last PNP governor, Pedro Rosselló, was a Democrat and ran Al Gore's campaign in Puerto Rico). By contrast, centrist-liberal commonwealth supporters (*populares* or *autonomistas*) vote for the PPD, which supports maintaining ties with the United States while gradually increasing Puerto Rico's autonomy. The commonwealth arrangement, PPD supporters note, exempts Puerto Rico from federal income taxes and has allowed Congress to create special tax incentives for mainland companies to relocate in Puerto Rico. Finally, left-radical *independentistas* support the small pro-environment, pro-labor, and pacifist Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP).

As members of a broadly nationalist cultural elite and a traditionally leftist intelligentsia, Puerto Rican professors disproportionately support the pro-independence PIP. Though the PIP generally attracts the votes of only 4 percent of the population, it looms much larger on campuses. And if independence and commonwealth are the most-favored options in the Puerto Rican academy, statehood is, by default,



ABOVE: RUBÉN BERRIOS OF THE PRO-INDEPENDENCE P.I.P. TOP RIGHT: EX-GOVERNOR PEDRO ROSSELLÓ OF THE PRO-STATEHOOD N.P.P. BOTTOM RIGHT: CURRENT GOVERNOR SILA CALDERÓN OF THE PRO-COMMONWEALTH P.D.P.

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the least. "The tradition of positioning yourself intellectually in Puerto Rico usually meant distancing yourself from statehood," explains UPR comparative literature professor Rubén Ríos. Indeed, though statehood supporters make up roughly half of the Puerto Rican population, pro-statehood professors are "a minority of a minority of a minority of a minority" at UPR, according to the pro-statehood historian Gonzalo F. Córdova. (Córdova refuses to mention the names of some of the "closet statehooders" he says he knows.)

Given the fixity of these positions, the academic left seems an unlikely, even heretical, place to find a plea for Puerto Rican statehood. Juan Duchesne, Aurea María Sotomayor, and their allies were once reliably pro-independence. Now they critique Puerto Rican nationalism with European-sounding cultural theory, and their support for the Vieques protesters strikes some as merely lukewarm. Critics further charge the radicals with taking a patronizing approach to Puerto Rico itself. Juan Giusti, a UPR historian who supports a version of independence that includes a lengthy transition period, takes umbrage at the radicals' contention that statehood would open up democratic possibilities for Puerto Rico. "That really is insulting," says Giusti, "because all the democratic dimensions of popular culture in Puerto Rico are just passed over."

LIKE MANY Puerto Rican intellectuals, the radical statehooders complain of a growing disillusionment and fatigue with the island's long-deadlocked status debate. Yes, Puerto Rico's colonial problem must be solved. But must the commonwealth's political parties remain shackled to status positions, which can lead them to overlook such pressing issues as San Juan's staggering crime problem? "It's as if somebody had a heart problem and a broken leg, and he said, Well, the only way in which I can fix my leg is to deal with my heart problem," observes the UPR law professor Efrén Rivera Ramos. Ramos is not a radical statehooder, but his words echo many intellectuals' disenchantment with status politics as usual.

In grafting a defense of statehood onto left-wing politics, radical statehood attempts to break out of the traditional status debate by subverting its categories. It's a trick the statehooders learned from UPR's original mavericks, *las postmodernistas* (the epithet is often meant pejoratively). This brand of postmodernism derives, to a significant extent, from the work of the Marxist scholar José Luis González, who critiqued nationalist nostalgia for Puerto Rican cultural traditions and folklore. (Among the island's most frequently cited folkways are musical rhythms like *bomba* and *plena* and staple dishes such as rice and beans.) In his 1980 book, *El país de cuatro pisos,* González claimed that this concept of Puerto Rican national identity was socially constructed by particular groups for particular purposes: Its core elements were predicated on Puerto Rican social hierarchies and appealed most to the middle class. (The book was published in the United States in 1993 as *The Four Storeyed Country and Other Essays.*)

Building on the theories of González and others, Duchesne and Sotomayor helped found *Postdata*—the first of UPR's postmodernist journals—in 1991. The premiere issue, produced with a photocopy machine and paper clips, included articles by Duchesne, Sotomayor, and others questioning the very concept of a fixed Puerto Rican national identity. From its inception, *Postdata* opened an intellectual chasm among Puerto Rican cultural theorists that has not closed. Is there a Puerto Rican nation? And if so, is it bound tightly together by the Spanish language and a Caribbean culture, or could its elements be more diverse?

"A PATENTLY INTOLERABLE SITUATION"

If you log onto the "International" section of America Online, you will find Puerto Rico classified as a separate country—a strong sign that most Americans know very little about the island's political status. Given that Puerto Rico's fate was decided in the U.S. courts, you'd expect professors of constitutional law to know better. Surprisingly, however, the legal literature on Puerto Rico remains noticeably sparse.

According to Sanford Levinson, a University of Texas law professor, the legal academy unjustly ignores the Supreme Court cases that defined Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States. Levinson contends that the early-twentieth-century *Insular Cases,* as they are known, are "central documents in the history of American racism": Indeed, they are the work of the same Court that upheld segregation in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*. In a recent article in *Constitutional Commentary,* Levinson argues that *Downes* v. *Bidwell,* a 1901 decision that still controls Puerto Rico's political status, is a scholarly "treasure trove."

Downes was decided in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, and its central concern was whether residents of newly acquired territories would be entitled to the same constitutional protections as U.S. citizens. Or, as the question was phrased then: When the United States expands into new territory—spatially, but also racially and linguistically—does the Constitution follow the flag?

In *Downes,* the Court answered that question in the negative, providing a legal justification for U.S. imperialism. The Court ruled five to four that Puerto Rico was an "unincorporated territory" of the United States, unlike Arizona and other "incorporated" territories then on the fast track to statehood. Hence, it was fully subordinate to the powers of Congress. This meant the island could be held as a colonial possession indefinitely and its people kept in a state of political disenfranchisement.

A 1917 statute granted citizenship to native Puerto Ricans, but *Downes* continues to define those citizens' relationship with the United States. Although he concurred with a recent decision denying resident Puerto Ricans the presidential vote, First Circuit Court of Appeals chief judge Juan R. Torruella took the opportunity to describe the legacy of the *Insular Cases* as a "patently intolerable situation." Torruella, a pro-statehood Puerto Rican and the author of *The Supreme Court and Puerto Rico: The Doctrine of Separate and Unequal* (University of

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Like postmodernists elsewhere, the *Postdata* writers insisted on the mutability and multiplicity of identities, as against any notion of a unitary and fixed national character. Puerto Ricanness, the postmodernists asserted, continually transforms and evolves, combining elements from the United States, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. In his *Puerto Rican Jam* essay, "Islands at the Crossroads," the radical statehooder Augustín Lao exults in "the continuous transit of peoples, TV programs, icons, ideologies, letters, newspapers, money, goods, festivals, dramas, conspiracies, and so on," between Puerto Rico and the United States. Many *puertorriqueñistas*, by contrast, fear that U.S.-dominated globalism threatens authentic Puerto Rican culture—Spanish-speaking and Catholic, hospitable and fiercely proud of its Olympic team, which would presumably be lost if statehood prevails.

JUAN DUCHESNE AND AUREA SOTOMAYOR SIGNED THE ORIGINAL RADICAL STATEHOOD MANIFESTO.

After the debut of *Postdata*, the next landmark moment for the postmodernists was a wildly controversial article by the UPR historian Carlos Pabón in the first issue of *Bordes*, another postmodernist journal, in 1995. The essay, "De Albizu a Madonna," was illustrated with an inflammatory montage grafting the head of nationalist firebrand Albizu Campos onto a picture of the seminude pop star draped in a Puerto Rican flag—suggesting that militant Puerto Rican nationalism had gone mainstream, taking a softer, cultural turn. In the article, Pabón—who takes no status position and says he abhors the whole debate—traced the mutation of nationalism from an anticolonial *albizuista* version in the 1930s to its present incarnation, which defines itself more against cultural assimilation and statehood than against direct colonial subjugation. Pabón called this newer incarnation "neo-nationalism," a term that has stuck.

Many on the pro-independence academic left found Pabón's article insulting. Felipe Pimentel, a professor of Puerto Rican studies at Hunter College who calls himself an *independentista* but not a nationalist, remarks that the *postmodernistas* conflate supporters of independence with nationalists, freely attributing totalitarian impulses to both. Others echo the concern. "I don't see any need to sacralize the nation," says Juan Giusti. However, he continues, postmodernists and radical statehooders all too frequently assail a straw-man version of Puerto Rican nationalism. "I've heard postmodern thinkers make the connection between Puerto Rican nationalism and genocide in the Balkans," he says. "I have big problems with that."

For radical statehooders, the challenge is to fashion a distinct, if flexible, sense of island culture that neither invites nor excludes U.S. influence. Unlike more traditional statehooders, some of whom are so enamored of the United States that they are often mocked as *piti yankis* (little Yankees), the radicals understand that the island is not culturally suited for swift assimilation with the United States. But in *Puerto Rican Jam*, the editors also suggest that

Puerto Rico, 1985), further threatened "corrective judicial action" à la *Brown* v. *Board of Education* if Congress does not cease its "outrageous disregard" for the rights of the nearly four million Puerto Ricans currently under its power.

Levinson believes *Downes* could precipitate a constitutional crisis if a majority of Puerto Ricans, after democratic deliberation, petitioned Congress for statehood and were refused. In a thought experiment in his *Constitutional Commentary* article, Levinson wonders what possible justification Congress could give for such refusal: "That most Puerto Ricans are non-white? That they are Catholic? That they are poor? That they do not speak English?" Such reasoning might be consistent with *Downes*'s precedent, but it would certainly not pass muster in today's legal environment.

Levinson describes his article as an "evangelical" work, and some signs indicate that the legal establishment is open to conversion. The newly published law textbook *Race and Races: Cases and Resources for a Diverse America* (West, 2000), by Juan F. Perea, Stephanie M. Wildman, Richard Delgado, and Angela P. Harris, includes a section on Puerto Ricans and a discussion of the *Insular Cases*. This August, Duke University Press will publish a collection of essays called *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution*, edited by Christina Duffy Burnett, a Second Circuit law clerk, and Burke Marshall, an emeritus professor of law at Yale who was a civil rights official during the Kennedy era. The book will contain a version of Levinson's *Constitutional Commentary* article as well as pieces by Torruella, the Second Circuit judge José A. Cabranes, and other Puerto Rican and Stateside legal scholars exploring the problem of the U.S. territories.

None of this attention will necessarily avert the constitutional crisis Levinson foresees. As with electoral reform, Levinson observes, Puerto Rico's political status is "not going to become a front-burner issue until the train wreck happens." The University of Puerto Rico law professor Efrén Rivera Ramos, who has written extensively on the *Insular Cases* and is a contributor to *Foreign in a Domestic Sense*, concurs. Says Rivera Ramos, "What would have happened if people had forgotten about the *Dred Scott* case, nobody talks about it, and all of a sudden people started to say, Oh my God, *this* is what the Supreme Court decided a hundred years ago! What have we been looking at that we missed this?" —C.M.

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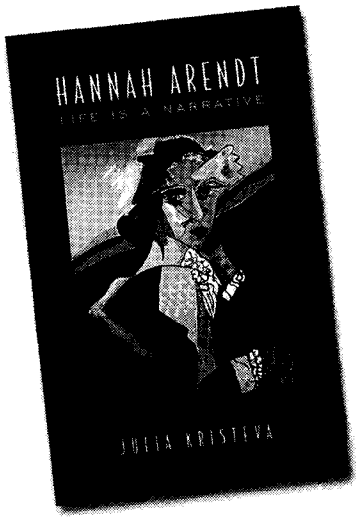

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because Puerto Rico's pervasive but vague cultural nationalism has not translated into widespread support for independence, the notion of a strong connection between Puerto Ricanness and any particular status option should be abandoned.

Whatever does define the Puerto Rican nation, radical statehooders stress that nearly half of it (3.2 million *voting* Puerto Ricans) already lives Stateside anyway. Puerto Rico, says *Puerto Rican Jam* co-editor Frances Negrón Muntaner, has become "a cultural nation that has transcended its immediate borders." Of the Stateside Puerto Ricans, she says: "They're us!"

ON MY WAY to UPR's Río Piedras campus in search of statehooders, radical or otherwise, I walk south along Avenida Ponce de León. Crossing an overpass over Avenida Jesús T. Piñero—named after Puerto Rico's first native governor, who was appointed to office in 1946 by President Truman—I get a strong sense of the political culture in Puerto Rico, where voter turnout regularly exceeds 80 percent. I'm still several blocks from the university, but campus-related graffiti have spread to the overpass like kudzu. Slogans such as LA UPR ESTÁ CON VIEQUES and VIEQUES SÍ, MARINA NO compete with layered rows of weathered political placards from the November election advertising the campaigns of the commonwealth governor, the newly elected resident commissioner (Puerto Rico's single nonvoting representative in Congress), and numerous others. Taking in all these political ads, I realize that swing states like Florida, Pennsylvania, and Michigan weren't the United States's only electoral battlegrounds.

The neighborhood's junk peddlers, construction, and urban crud recede behind me as I walk through the gate to UPR's neatly manicured campus. An avenue of palm trees points toward the central university clock tower, beige but encrusted with brightly painted Spanish-style relief work. In Puerto Rico's equatorial December, the students dress the way Ivy League students do in September and May, in tank tops and flip-flops. They seem to spend a lot of time smoking and playing classical guitars. All the bulletin boards feature lavish Sprint advertisements, and many of the students carry cell phones. As if that weren't Americanized enough, one student I pass along a breezeway greets his friends with: "Whassup, muthafuckas!?!" Then they carry on their conversation in Spanish.

What's now the University of Puerto Rico was originally founded as a school for teachers shortly after the United States won Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam in the Spanish-American War. Between 1923 and 1925, the United States provided generous funding to help found today's University of Puerto Rico. But at the same time, the United States continued to treat the island like what it was—a colony.

As a result, UPR became both the intellectual center of the island and a breeding ground for nationalist independence advocates. These included scores of professors and students who would play key roles in Albizu Campos's militant Puerto Rican Nationalist Party. When Muñoz and his pro-commonwealth PPD came to power, Muñoz reached out to nationalist-leaning intellectual elites with a cultural-development campaign called Operation Serenity and the founding of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. Muñoz's politics also played well at UPR, where the most audible faculty voices were those of nationalists and independence supporters, on the one hand, and supporters of his newly founded commonwealth government, on the other. As for the pro-statehood PNP? "What it has never had are intellectual cadres," explains Carlos Pabón.

That became clear to pro-statehood PNP governor Pedro Rosselló when he showed up to speak at UPR in 1997. In his party's typical fashion, he was advocating the sale of the then-public Puerto Rico Telephone Company. Protesting students clashed with Rosselló's security entourage. Some counterprotesters defended the governor and *la privatización,* but their campus legacy appears to be a single tattered bumper sticker, placed high up along a walkway where it can't be torn down. UNIVERSITARIOS CON ROSSELLÓ, it reads.

Today, pro-statehood students are customarily booed when they request the mike at UPR assemblies; accordingly, their political favorites tend to scorn the university. One former PNP governor and resident commissioner made it a clever campaign ritual to visit the campus, where he would rile up the *independentista* students, then denounce them as pinkos to score political points with moderates. It's

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hardly surprising that radical statehooders feel uncomfortable in this environment. "I'm not going to say that the statehood movement would flower in the university," says former UPR president Fernando Agrait. "But the pro-ROTC movement wouldn't flower inside Harvard."

Still, to depict UPR as a hotbed of nationalism, as radical statehooders sometimes do, would be an oversimplification. No one has ever conducted a survey, but Carlos Pabón suspects that particularly among the students, a significant proportion may be quiet statehooders, as in the general population. Of course, there are other ways of testing the proposition. Talking with UPR students, I inevitably get a raucous reaction when I threaten to measure nationalist sentiment on campus by draping myself in an American flag. "Here? Don't do it!" cries Antonio, twenty, a junior. "They'll burn you," an eighteen-year-old freshman named Ingrid says with a laugh. "Starting with the flag, then you."

But Cristina, nineteen, offers another perspective. As we begin to talk, she lights a cigarette, then emphasizes that I had better not put an *h* in her name when I write about our interview. Cristina attended Saint John's, the most expensive high school in Puerto Rico, where all classes are taught in English. There, she says, most people think UPR is "a piece of shit," and students—wealthy and largely pro-statehood—are encouraged to go Stateside for college. Probably because of this education, Cristina's English is excellent. And she swears, also in English, when she forgets the right word.

When I ask Cristina whether everyone at UPR is really a nationalist, she explains that the nationalists are the loudest, the most outspoken. But she's not convinced they're a majority. Of nationalist students like some of the strikers who trashed Sotomayor's classroom, she comments, "I think they might take a few things too personally."

RADICAL statehood has arrived on the campus scene just as conservative statehooders lose their grip on the island's politics. After eight years in power, the PNP lost the commonwealth governorship in November 2000 to the centrist, pro-commonwealth PPD. (An islandwide referendum on statehood had also failed in 1998: Commonwealthers, who protested the way their option had been defined on the ballot, tipped the vote toward "none of the above.") The *populares* will soon control UPR's administrative structure, which essentially changes hands along with the government, and the arrangement might not be easy on the radical statehooders: *Populares* and *independentistas* are longtime allies in the cultural sphere, where both accuse statehooders of favoring assimilation. Nonetheless, Duchesne enthusiastically hails the PNP's gubernatorial loss as a potential "cleansing" for the statehood idea. As the PNP regroups, he reflects, perhaps the party will draw on radical statehood and veer to the left.

CHRIS MOONEY

STUDENT STRIKERS DISRUPTED SOTOMAYOR'S EXAM, PUSHED HER STUDENTS OUT THE DOOR, AND OVERTURNED THE DESKS.

Can the radical statehooders infiltrate the PNP's ranks and help transform it? "The pro-statehood people either completely ignore them or still think of them as these pinkos, these hidden communists," scoffs sociology professor Juan Manuel Carrión. But radical statehooders say otherwise. Ramón Grosfoguel's political columns in *El nuevo día* had some effect on the party, they insist. And they point out that despite the PNP's conservative slant, liberal statehooders are actually quite numerous in Puerto Rico. Perhaps the paramount example is Luis Dávila Colón, the best-selling opinion journalist and television and radio commentator whose pro-statehood opinions—and harsh digs at pro-commonwealth PPD politicians, like the new governor, Sila Calderón, whom he attacked in a book called *GodSila*—are known throughout the island. When I ask Dávila if he is a conservative, he lets out a belly laugh. "Well," he says, "I can tell you that my first vote in the United States, and only vote in the United States, I cast for George McGovern."

If observers can't decide whether radical statehooders are radical or conservative, postnationalist or assimilationist, there is still one trait these provocateurs clearly share: strong ties to the continental United States. Notes UPR communications professor Silvia Alvarez Curbelo, the postmodernist statehooders speak "the language of U.S. academia." Many of the Puerto Rican scholars who signed the manifesto now live and work in the States. In the words of Dávila, who invited the radical statehooders onto his radio program twice, "They're a diaspora." Duchesne and Sotomayor are the only radical-statehood manifesto signers still working at the University of Puerto Rico.

At the October 2000 meeting of the U.S.-based Puerto Rican Studies Association—where few scholars support

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statehood and the luncheon entertainment consists of a Puerto Rican poet rapping about "our perverted Yankee fantasy"—one pro-independence professor fills me in on his sociological understanding of radical statehood. "One explanation would be that the sectors that promote statehood...are extrapolating from their own personal experiences as intellectuals in the U.S.," he says. "They somehow believe that because they operate in a very free-spirited, multicultural environment at the university level, therefore [statehood will engender] the same openness in the political system or in the society as a whole. And they miscalculate, because that's not true."

The United States just isn't the rosy, open-minded place radical statehooders would like it to be, say critics. Juan Giusti points out that rather than opening minds in the United States, the promise of increased demographic diversity could just as easily frighten many Americans away from accepting Puerto Rico as a state. And Javier Colón, a pro-independence political scientist at UPR, comments: "It's true that there are conditions for some kind of radical democratic space in the U.S.? I don't see it. I see a society that is highly divided by income, that is still highly divided by race.... Why should I expect that suddenly the United States will change itself to make possible this kind of radical democratic plan?"

Statehooders counter that it is the nationalists and *independentistas* who suffer from parochialism—and perhaps even fear of leaving behind the cloistered world of identity politics. "Independence lets intellectuals be the spokespeople of a national culture," points out Frances Negrón Muntaner. "Whereas statehood really makes you an intellectual in a much bigger pond."

Perhaps it's not surprising that the debate over whether Puerto Rico should become a state finally hinges on whether the United States could truly include Puerto Ricans on their own terms—as a Spanish-speaking, Caribbean people. There are good grounds for pessimism: The U.S. Senate's defeat of the 1998 self-determination bill convinced many Puerto Ricans that racism was alive and well in the United States.

Radical statehood, on the other hand, is a kind of clarion call for guarded optimism about the United States—or at least about what it could become. And that's why it raises, with a particular urgency, questions that have persisted since U.S. troops landed in Puerto Rico in 1898 to relieve Puerto Ricans of their Spanish yoke and replace it with another. Are we really so broad minded that we can accommodate a very different culture and language within our own? Or is the United States, despite its grand gestures of global benevolence, too small to accept the diversity of the people already under its sovereign command?

"When we are talking about Puerto Rico," observes Giusti, "we are also talking about the United States."

Chris Mooney is a writing fellow at *The American Prospect*. His article "For Your Eyes Only: The CIA Will Let You See Classified Documents, But at What Price?" appeared in the November 2000 *LF*.

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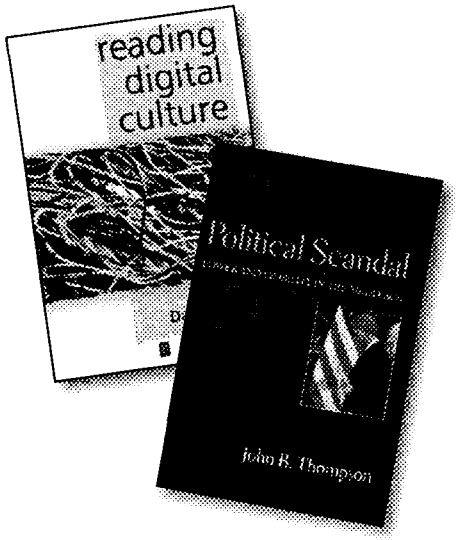

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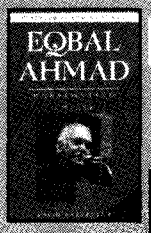

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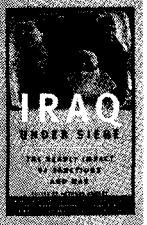

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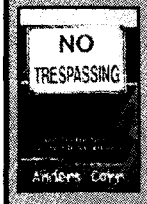

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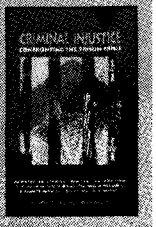

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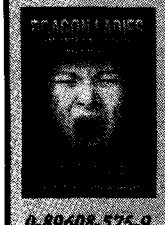

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BOUNCING OFF THE WALLS

LEO BERANEK AND THE SCIENCE OF CONCERT HALL DESIGN

BY **PAUL MITCHINSON**

ON OCTOBER 15, 1900, THE Boston Symphony Orchestra performed a gala concert to inaugurate its new home, the now-legendary Symphony Hall. At the time, scientific and technological innovations in acoustics promised an era of unprecedented sonic magnificence, and Symphony Hall stood as a monument to the harmonious collaboration between art and science. Today, a bronze plaque hangs in the building. "Symphony Hall," it boasts, was "the first auditorium in the world to be built in known conformity with acoustical laws [and] designed in accordance with...mathematical formulae." Indeed, when the plaque was originally unveiled in 1946, modern science seemed at the height of its powers, capable of mastering everything from atomic power to the invisible, ineffable world of musical sound.

But the science of acoustics has since changed its tune. Though Symphony Hall is still ranked as one of the greatest concert halls in the world (alongside Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Vienna's Grosser Musikvereinssaal), architectural acousticians are now more likely to be burned in effigy than memorialized in bronze. Ever since World War II, cities from Paris to London, from Toronto to New York, have fallen victim to multimillion-dollar concert halls that embody the latest "advances" in acoustic science yet sound little better than transistor radios. When acousticians failed to preserve the once-famed acoustics of New York's Carnegie Hall during renovations in 1986, the *New York Times* critic Bernard Holland gave voice to a growing feeling of disenchantment when he declared that "acoustics are not a science, not even an art, but a roll of the dice."

Did Symphony Hall really owe its success to "known conformity" with acoustic laws? Or was its effective design merely fortuitous? After a hundred years, the discipline of acoustic science has conspicuously failed to answer that question—though not for want of trying. If there is a single figure whose story conveys the soaring ambitions, shattering disappointments, and continuing ambiguities of acoustic science, it is Leo Leroy Beranek, an eighty-six-year-old electrical engineer who has been hailed as the field's presiding genius and criticized as a technocrat with calculators in place of ears.

When thousands of music lovers make their annual pilgrimage to the Tanglewood Music Shed in Lenox, Massachusetts, they unknowingly appreciate the work of Beranek's consulting group, Bolt, Beranek, and Newman (BBN), which transformed an unconventional outdoor space into a worthy summer home for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. When Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev memorably banged his shoe on his desk at the United Nations General Assembly in 1960, it was BBN that ensured the sound would be sharp, precise, and dramatic.

But for all his accomplishments, Beranek will forever be associated with one of the greatest, and most public, acoustic disasters of the twentieth century: the opening of Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall in 1962. Though the hall has since been adjusted and readjusted, gutted, rebuilt, and even renamed, few would consider Avery Fisher Hall (as the hall is now known) an unqualified acoustic success.

The Lincoln Center disaster drove Beranek out of concert hall design for many years. But in the mid-1990s, he made a much-publicized return to acoustic consulting, shaping the soundscape for a concert hall and an opera house in Tokyo Opera City. The acoustics of these halls have

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earned Beranek enthusiastic reviews from musicians and conductors, despite an experimental—and thus acoustically risky—architectural design that includes, among other anomalies, a pyramid-shaped ceiling. Could architectural acoustics at long last be coming of age? Has Beranek finally discovered, as one of his colleagues has claimed, the "Rosetta stone" of pure sound?

WALLACE SABINE, the Harvard physicist who masterminded Symphony Hall, founded the science of architectural acoustics in 1895. At the time, Harvard professors and students were complaining about the acoustics of a lecture hall in the newly built Fogg Art Museum. Sabine identified the problem immediately: excessive reverberation. "A word spoken in an ordinary tone of voice was audible for five and a half seconds afterwards," he wrote in his *Collected Papers on Acoustics.* "During this time even a very deliberate speaker would have uttered the twelve or fifteen succeeding syllables." The result was an incomprehensible muddle of verbiage.

For two years, Sabine experimented on the room, filling it with an array of cushions, carpets, and student bodies. Before long, he came up with a simple way of calculating reverberation, which helped solve the Fogg's problem. Sabine's formula states that reverberation time rises in direct proportion to a room's cubic volume and in inverse proportion to the amount of sound-absorbing material. The type of material also matters, and he calculated absorption coefficients for a wide variety of objects, including plaster walls, windows, and hair cushions on upholstered chairs. He put his formula to good use when he became a chief consultant to the builders of Symphony Hall.

The Sabine formula remains, with certain modifications, the basis for modern acoustic science. But progress ever since has been frustratingly slow. More than sixty years after Sabine's work on reverberation, a 1958 textbook on building acoustics admitted that reverberation time remained "the only acoustical quality that can be measured objectively." In the 1950s and 1960s, it would be Beranek's turn to advance the discipline.

BERANEK SHARES Sabine's story with me during a gray January afternoon I spend with him in his three-thousand-square-foot condominium overlooking the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts, just a few blocks away from Harvard Yard. Like Sabine, Beranek has close Harvard connections: In 1938, as a twenty-four-year-old graduate student in electrical engineering, he helped Professor Frederick Hunt invent the first lightweight phonograph pickup, enabling the development of long-playing recordings. In 1953, he became the first president of BBN. (His most celebrated accomplishment, perhaps, came in 1968, when BBN was awarded a million-dollar contract by the U.S. Department of Defense to create a crucial precursor to the Internet.) Regaling me with anecdotes and gossip from the worlds of engineering and music, Beranek takes me in a cab down to Symphony Hall, where we enter the building through a side door. As a former chairman of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Beranek is a familiar presence here, and choruses of "Hi, Leo!" pursue us as we coast up the narrow staircase and step out onto the stage to admire Sabine's handiwork in detail.

Beranek still seems in awe of Sabine's accomplishment. He gestures eagerly around the hall, pointing out the architectural details that help create acoustic magic: the small stage area; the orchestra shell; the sound-diffusing balcony fronts, niches, and coffered ceiling.

How much of Symphony Hall's magnificence is the result of science, I ask him, and how much of it is luck? "Well, they chose the right model," says Beranek, alluding to the old Gewandhaus concert hall in Leipzig, "and Sabine's formula enabled him to compute the reverberation time." But he admits that serendipity played a part. For instance, the hall's architects had wanted to create a fireproof building, so they constructed the walls out of concrete and plaster on wire lath. Fortunately, the solid construction allows the hall to reverberate nicely with a strong bass sound; thin wood walls would have caused the hall to swallow low notes. In addition, Beranek adds, "the stage enclosure was a pure guess, done by intuition entirely. But it worked."

Intuition, as Beranek came to understand, has its place in a scientific approach to acoustics. After all, acoustic qualities are always to some degree a matter of subjective judgments.

THE ACOUSTICS OF TOKYO OPERA CITY HAVE EARNED BERANEK ENTHUSIASTIC REVIEWS FROM MUSICIANS AND CONDUCTORS, DESPITE THE CONCERT HALL'S TRICKY ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN.

Musicians and conductors talk about the desirability of spaciousness, intimacy, strength, warmth, and clarity. In response, acoustic scientists use sophisticated microphones, speakers, and mathematical formulas in an effort to isolate independent variables—or "orthogonal parameters," in the language of mathematics—that they believe correspond to these mysterious qualities.

Take reverberation time, for example. Audiences know that orchestras sound dry, ragged, and ill blended when performing in a space with little or no reverberation, such as a recording studio. With too much reverberation, on the other hand, swift contrapuntal passages sound blurred. But when the reverberation time is "just right"—about two seconds for the best halls, according to extensive polling of musicians and conductors—the strings begin to "sing," and a good orchestra coalesces into a single instrument.

Following in Sabine's footsteps, Beranek began to look for other orthogonal parameters that correspond to aspects of acoustic excellence. One of the first acoustic qualities he focused on was so-called intimacy. In an "intimate" hall, listeners feel "connected" with the performers, as though they were listening to the concert in a small room. Beranek suggested that intimacy was directly related to what he dubbed the "initial-time-delay gap" (ITDG). During an orchestral concert, direct sound reaching

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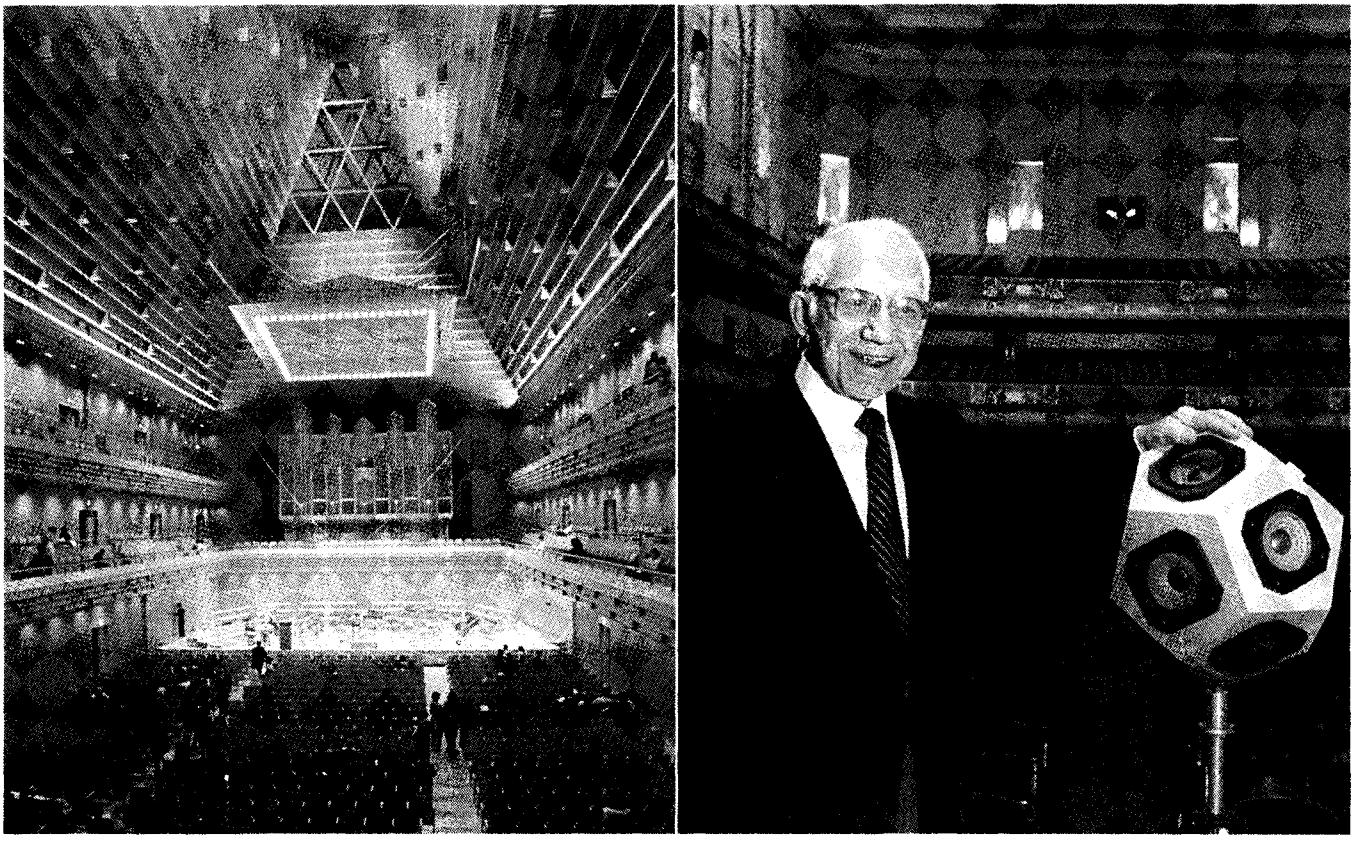
the audience is quickly followed by reflections from the sidewalls or ceilings. If these early reflections begin much later than twenty to thirty milliseconds after the initial impulse, he discovered, acoustic intimacy suffers. BBN's design of a new orchestra enclosure and acoustic canopy for the Tanglewood Music Shed in 1959 incorporated the insights of this theory; the Shed was a huge success.

BERANEK SOON BECAME the preeminent figure in the field of acoustic science and was asked by Lincoln Center to be the acoustic consultant for Philharmonic Hall. To prepare himself for such a public commission, Beranek conducted a massive survey of fifty-four concert halls around the world, making detailed technical measurements of reverberation time, loudness, and the ITDG. More ambitiously, he tried to assess the relative contribution of each variable to the psychological perception of acoustic excellence. The results were published in his 1962 book, *Music, Acoustics, and Architecture.*

"I thought that Beranek's book had really sewn up the question of concert hall design," says Harold Marshall, professor emeritus of architecture and founder of the Acoustics Research Centre in Auckland, New Zealand. Even musicians were in agreement. In the book's foreword, the esteemed conductor Eugene Ormandy gushed that "Lady Luck has finally been supplanted by careful analysis and the painstaking application of new but firmly grounded acoustic principles." Beranek seemed optimistic about Philharmonic Hall as late as May 1962, when it staged its first "tuning concert," conducted by a young Seiji Ozawa. "As the strings entered," Beranek wrote in *Music, Acoustics, and Architecture*, "it was apparent that the hall would fulfill its designers' great expectations and that the new home for the Philharmonic would be an acoustical success."

But four months later, when Philharmonic Hall celebrated its official opening, Beranek's reputation quickly fell to pieces. The orchestra sounded harsh and unblended, and the bass section was almost inaudible. The musicians were up in arms, unable to hear themselves on the stage. Harold C. Schonberg, the *Times*'s illustrious music critic, said that the conventional wisdom about Philharmonic Hall was that it was a "great big, yellow, $16,000,000 lemon." George Szell, the celebrated conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, was witheringly dismissive.



PYRAMID-SHAPED CEILING AT TOKYO OPERA CITY (LEFT); LEO BERANEK AT BOSTON'S SYMPHONY HALL (RIGHT).

In hindsight, some of Philharmonic Hall's failures were the result of ill-advised architectural decisions. Beranek's original plan had called for a rectangle-shaped hall, but in order to increase the hall's capacity, architect Max Abramovitz squeezed in additional seating by designing bulging concave sidewalls. Unfortunately, a concave surface is known to "focus" reflected sound on particular areas, causing echoes and other distortions. And Lincoln Center eliminated the sound-diffusing details proposed by Beranek. "They ran out of money," Beranek explains. "If we'd had good diffusion, then the other problems could have been dealt with."

But for all these mitigating circumstances, many problems did appear to be the result of Beranek's recommendations—

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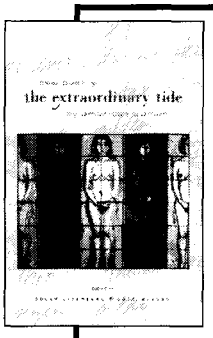

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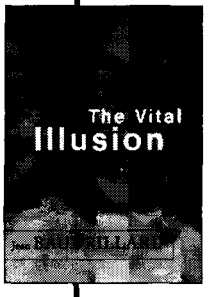

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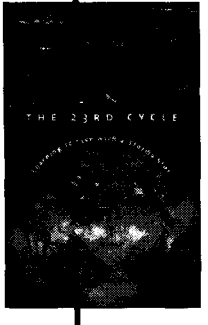

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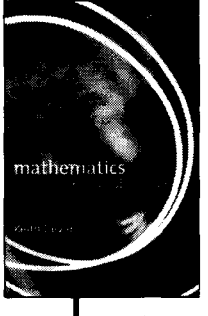

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specifically, his efforts to ensure a short ITDG. Given the hall's great width, most of these early reflections were produced by a series of reflecting panels hung low from the ceiling. "Leo had been very successful with overhead panels in Tanglewood," explains Manfred Schroeder, a professor of physics at Germany's University of Göttingen. "So from that he took encouragement to introduce similar panels in Philharmonic Hall." But Philharmonic Hall's panels were smaller and more dispersed than those in Tanglewood. The long wavelengths associated with low-frequency notes "bent around the panels, got lost, and wouldn't come down," says Columbia University's Cyril M. Harris, the acoustician responsible for Philharmonic Hall's rebirth as Avery Fisher Hall in the 1970s. "It was a little like listening to a hi-fi set with the bass turned off." Today, Beranek admits that it was a staggering professional humiliation.

THOUGH disastrous for Lincoln Center, Beranek's failure provided a rare and valuable opportunity for other acousticians: They could test out their own theories by explaining what had gone wrong. Scores of researchers descended on New York, eager to perform an autopsy on a fresh acoustic corpse. Some acousticians discerned what became known as the "seat-dip effect," a significant deterioration of bass reverberation as sound passes over rows of seats.

Schroeder's insight about the failure of Beranek's ceiling panels to reflect bass notes was one of the first inklings of the importance of what has since become known as "early lateral reflections." In several academic papers in the 1970s, Harold Marshall and Michael Barron (a Ph.D. student at the time) expanded on this point, concluding that the subjective quality of "spatial impression" in music is directly related to reflected sound from the sidewalls. Such reflections make listeners feel "enveloped" by the sound of an orchestra, which seems to surround the audience rather than emanate from a small fixed point on the stage.

In 1972, Marshall incorporated these discoveries into the arena-shaped Christchurch Town Hall in New Zealand, in which lateral reflections were created by low reflecting walls that separated the audience into blocks. The innovative design proved an acoustic success. The precise relationship between lateral reflections and a listener's sense of spaciousness has yet to be established with confidence, and several different orthogonal parameters have been proposed. But the effort to create lateral reflections became popular around the world. The architectural implications, for the most part, have been conservative. "One of the justifications for a parallel-sided hall is that if you keep things narrow enough, you'll get lateral reflections," explains Barron, who now lectures at the University of Bath. Wide fan-shaped halls were out; standard rectangular halls with narrow sidewalls—often called shoe boxes—were in. As long as one reined in the architects, Marshall and Barron implied, good sound could be guaranteed by good mathematics.

NOT EVERYONE responded to the debacle at Philharmonic Hall with such optimism. While Schroeder and Marshall leaped at an opportunity to improve the science of acoustics, devising new measurements and formulas, others

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threw in the towel. Russell Johnson, an acoustician who joined BBN in 1954, helped the firm design several acoustically unsatisfactory halls—including Philharmonic Hall. The experiences made him increasingly disenchanted with the scientific attitude in acoustics. "I started to say to myself that the established way isn't working," Johnson says over the phone from the offices of Artec, his New York–based consulting firm. "Scientists and engineers devised rules based on mathematics and formulae about the physics of sound. But most of these scientists did not love music, did not understand music. They weren't really interested in music, and because they knew so little about music, when they opened a new hall and went to listen to it, they immediately declared it perfect." His conclusion? "I had to teach myself a new way to design these things."

In fact, as he readily admits, Johnson taught himself a very *old* way to design halls—a tradition that he says had been lost during the first half of the twentieth century. His philosophy, which is based on close consultation with musicians themselves and on a cautious architectural aesthetic, is shared by Harris, another acoustician known for his conservative approach. Harris thinks that the scientific approach to acoustics has been grossly overrated. "It helps, I suppose, to sell a job. If several consultants are being considered for a job, many architects might be sold on the fact that 'Oh, I have a computer. I can check all this stuff out ahead of time.' That gives them a certain comfort." Johnson has been particularly successful with his more intuitive approach. Artec, which he established in 1970 after leaving BBN, has grown into one of the most well regarded acoustic consulting groups in the world. Its many critically acclaimed halls include the Eugene McDermott Concert Hall in Dallas and Symphony Hall in Birmingham, England.

But Johnson's conservative approach has also infuriated some architects. Last year, he was commissioned to improve the acoustics of Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall, a large semi-surround auditorium. Johnson's plan to narrow the upper part of the hall has enraged its original architect, Arthur Erickson. In an Op-Ed in Canada's *National Post* in November, Erickson was highly dismissive of Artec's faith in the shoe-box-shaped hall: "In the intangible pseudo-science of acoustics, where so much is dependent on the subtleties of personal experience, I question the wisdom of proceeding on a course that contradicts the whole basis on which the hall was based."

BERANEK, FOR HIS PART, assumes that architectural innovation will press onward despite the misgivings of acousticians like Johnson. And so he continues to view architectural challenges as opportunities for new acoustic research. The number of acoustic qualities that he believes can be expressed mathematically has now increased to half a dozen or more, as enumerated in his 1996 book, *Concert and Opera Halls: How They Sound*. Some variables, such as warmth, can be measured through a simple variant of Sabine's original equation, using a ratio of reverberation times for lower- and higher-frequency sounds. Others, such as spaciousness, can be calculated by entirely new formulas, such as the "interaural cross-correlation coefficient" (according to Beranek and several Japanese researchers) or the "lateral fraction" (according to Marshall and Barron). Spatial effects, in fact, are now believed

LEONARD BERNSTEIN CONDUCTING IN PHILHARMONIC HALL, 1962

BERANEK HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL WITH OVERHEAD PANELS IN THE PAST, BUT AT PHILHARMONIC HALL THE EFFECT WAS LIKE "A HI-FI SET WITH THE BASS TURNED OFF."

to have several different components, measurable by different formulas. Diffusion continues to resist mathematical expression; it has to be estimated visually, by eyeballing fine-scale and large-scale architectural irregularities. But Beranek continues to insist on the primary importance of intimacy, measurable by the ITDG.

Besides reverberation time and the ITDG, none of these variables can be calculated on the basis of architectural plans alone. Even computers provide only crude estimates. ("The computer," says Beranek, is only "an added means of convincing architects that you're right.") Technology has allowed some progress, however. Miniature microphones can be embedded in architectural models, with useful results. It remains difficult to duplicate the absorbing effect of an audience, but this, too, has improved.

Beranek has made use of these recent innovations in his work in Japan. For Tokyo Opera City's concert hall, he estab-

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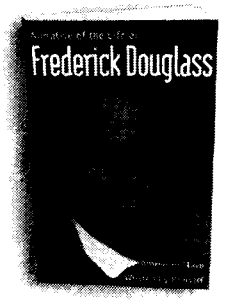

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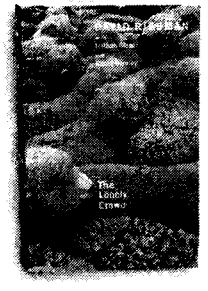

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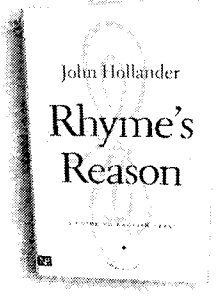

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lished a range of acceptable values for each parameter and tried to duplicate that range in the model. The architectural hurdles were significant. The architect insisted on covering the interior surfaces with wood, which is known to absorb significant bass; as a result, Beranek decided to eliminate any additional absorbent material, including carpeting, from the hall. A dramatic pyramid-shaped ceiling might have caused any number of acoustic irregularities, but these were compensated for by the use of diffusers and a large over-stage reflecting canopy of precisely calculated dimensions. "What has been accomplished is a miracle!" commented the cellist Yo-Yo Ma in a letter to Beranek. "This hall simply has some of the best acoustics in which I have ever had the privilege to play." The pianist András Schiff agreed, praising the hall's "warm, round, and reverberant" sound.

Beranek will face an even greater challenge this summer when he tunes Daiichi-Seimei Hall, a new auditorium near Tokyo. The interior walls are concave, a feature that often leads to catastrophic acoustic imbalances, as in Philharmonic Hall. Beranek seems unfazed. "We had to add acoustical materials in certain places to cut down on the reflections," he explains. But because those modifications tend to limit reverberation, Beranek had to make certain that the ceiling height in the original design was sufficient to ensure optimal reverberation time. The tinkering seems to have resulted in a hall with acoustics as good as any traditional rectangular hall. At least, that's what measurements taken in the model suggest. Only in June, during the hall's tuning concert, will Beranek know for sure. If he succeeds in making a hall with bulging sidewalls sound good, it will be a significant step toward personal redemption from the Philharmonic Hall experience.

BUT ARE BERANEK'S Japanese halls significant steps forward for science? Many authorities are skeptical. "I read the professional papers coming out of that project," comments Russell Johnson. "I feel that quite a bit of art went into that project, even though they told reporters that it was 99 percent scientific." Even some pure scientists are wary. "It seems just a bit too good to be true," says John Bradley, an acoustics expert at the National Research Council in Ottawa, Canada. "Beranek and the Japanese seem to focus on particular measures being the magic single measure. That's how he ran into trouble with Philharmonic Hall. It's more complicated than that; concert halls are multidimensional problems. If you focus on just one thing, you might get some of the others wrong."

Scientific advances always involve risks, experiments, and guesses. And the only way of advancing knowledge, as Marshall explains, is by "confronting a new problem that doesn't have a precedent." Most scientists are fortunate enough to confront these problems in dim windowless laboratories, well away from the public eye; acousticians are not so lucky. Despite a century of research, acoustic science remains something of a high-profile crapshoot. Leo Beranek, ever the gambler, may be just a little better than most at loading the dice.

Paul Mitchinson is a freelance writer based in Toronto and a regular contributor to Canada's *National Post*. His article "The Shostakovich Variations" appeared in the May/June 2000 *LF*.

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FOR MORE INFOR

THE ENGLISH INSTITUTE, 2001

THE 60TH MEETING OF THE ENGLISH INSTITUTE WILL EXPLORE NEW WORK under four headings: a topic, a genre, an author, and a text for group discussion. The topic panel, Bohemias, will inquire into the uneasy and uncertain relation these sites of artistic, social, and sexual experimentation bear to the dominant cultures from which they set themselves apart. We will consider the problematic genre of Romance, which has been powerfully theorized and historically embedded, while recent studies of late Greek and Roman antiquity have prompted broad reconsideration of the "genre" from its inception through subsequent cultural history. The author panel will revisit Walt Whitman, for whose early career the bohemian subcultures of New York City were of decisive importance. A discussion will follow of Kristeva's "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," which is a 1974 manifesto for the responsibilities of intellectuals written at the moment that poststructuralism, Maoism, psychoanalysis, and feminism were swirling together in Paris's literary political vanguard. For more information, please contact Betsy Brown, The English Institute, Harvard University, 12 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; e-mail: <englinst@fas.harvard.edu>; Web: http://www.englishinstitute.org.

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THE WHITNEY HUMANITIES CENTER AT YALE UNIVERSITY announces the 2000–2001 Tanner Lectures. Alexander Nehamas (Princeton University) will deliver two lectures on "'A Promise of Happiness': The Place of Beauty in a World of Art." The respondents to the lectures will be Richard Rorty (Stanford University) and Elaine Scarry (Harvard University). The lectures are free and open to the public. Whitney Humanities Center, 53 Wall St., New Haven, CT 06520. For more information, T: (203) 432-0670; e-mail: <michael.mirabile@yale.edu>; Web: www.yale.edu/whc.

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THIS CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS ON ADORNO'S POSTHUMOUS BOOK, *Aesthetic Theory*. It will be a one-day event, on April 4, 2001, at the University of Oregon. A co-sponsored event between Philosophy, Comparative Literature, and German Studies, a diverse audience is expected. Widely credited Adorno translater and critic Robert Hullot-Kentor will be the guest speaker. There will be a general talk in the afternoon with a discussion period following. Before the general talk there will be a faculty grouping, which will work through some textual aspects of Adorno. The event is free.

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THE WISDOM TRAP

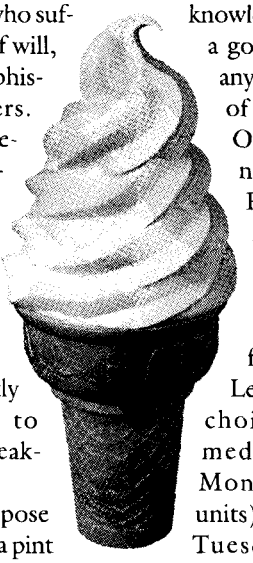
A LITTLE SELF-KNOWLEDGE CAN BE A DANGEROUS THING

WEAKNESS OF WILL COMPRISES two great arts: the art of procrastination and the art of immediate gratification. Procrastination means putting off something you should do; immediate gratification means doing something you should put off. Most of us are quite skilled in the practice of both these arts. The theory, however, still needs work.

Take procrastination. Let's say you have a choice between doing four hours of an unpleasant task on May 1 versus five hours on May 2. If you are presented with this choice right now, you will, quite reasonably, opt for the four hours on May 1. But suppose you are presented with the same choice on the morning of May 1. Then you will probably opt for the five hours on May 2, even though this means an extra hour of unpleasantness. Why should the passage of a couple of weeks cause your choice to flip in this way?

Some thinkers have noted that our inclinations, unlike our reason, are strongly biased toward the present. Today's pleasures and pains are simply more vivid to us, even though we know tomorrow's will be just as real. No wonder we overeat and undersave, miss deadlines, and develop addictions.

If that were all there was to say about weakness of will, it would not be of much theoretical interest. In the last couple of years, however, new subtleties have been discovered in the dynamics of self-control. Observe, first of all, that among people who suffer from weakness of will, some have more sophistication than others. They are able to foresee their future failures of will and plan against them. More naive types believe that they will behave in the future just the way they would currently like themselves to behave: without weakness of will.



For instance, suppose I am planning to eat a pint of ice cream tonight and a pint tomorrow night. If I am superhuman—endowed with perfect willpower—I buy a quart on the way home and enjoy half tonight and half tomorrow night. If I am weak willed and naive about it, I buy a quart on the way home from work—and then end up eating the whole thing after dinner. But if I am weak willed yet sophisticated—that is, possessed of the foresight to predict how I'll behave—I buy only a pint of ice cream on the way home from work, even though this is somewhat more expensive. So: The superhuman eats half a quart of ice cream each night; the sophisticate eats the same amount but pays more for it (because he buys it by the pint); and the naïf eats a quart a night.

Given that you are prone to weakness of the will, your life will be happier if you are sophisticated about it rather than naive, right? Surprisingly, it turns out that self-knowledge is not always a good thing. That, at any rate, is what a pair of economists—Ted O'Donoghue of Cornell and Matthew Rabin of UC-Berkeley—have shown recently.

Here is a simple example adapted from their work. Let's say you have a choice of seeing a mediocre movie on Monday (3 pleasure units), a good movie on Tuesday (5 pleasure units), or a really great movie on Wednesday (8 pleasure units). A person with perfect willpower is obviously going to wait for the Wednesday movie and get a full 8 units of pleasure. But suppose you are a bit weak willed. Specifically, you value future pleasures and pains only half as much as today's. Which movie will you end up seeing?

If you are naive, you will forgo Monday's mediocre movie, because the prospect of Wednesday's really great movie is more appealing, even with its effective pleasure yield discounted from 8 to 4 by your weakness of will. On Tuesday, however, things look different to you. You now give in and see the merely good movie on offer that day, because it promises 5 pleasure units, which is greater than Wednesday's weakness-of-will-discounted 4.

But suppose you are sophisticated about your weakness of will. Then on Monday you foresee the self-control problem you will have on Tuesday; that is, you know that if you skip Monday's mediocre movie, you will end up seeing the merely good movie on Tuesday rather than the really great movie on Wednesday. You realize that your choice is effectively between Monday's movie and Tuesday's. And because your weakness of will on Monday discounts the pleasure yield of Tuesday's movie from 5 to 2.5, you go ahead and see Monday's mediocre movie for 3 units of pleasure.

Notice what has happened here. The naïf's lack of foresight helps motivate him to pass up the mediocre movie and garner 5 units of pleasure from the good movie. The sophisticate, by contrast, recognizes on Monday that he will give in on Tuesday, which makes waiting less attractive. So he goes for immediate gratification and ends up with only 3 units of pleasure.

In most real-world situations, O'Donoghue and Rabin stress, being naive about your weakness of will is more dangerous than being sophisticated. For instance, naïfs are far more prone to procrastination—always, for example, putting off saving for retirement today on the over-optimistic assumption that they'll start tomorrow. Still, it is sobering to realize that the lapidary inscription on the temple to Apollo at Delphi—"Know Thyself"—can sometimes be rotten advice.

JIM HOLT

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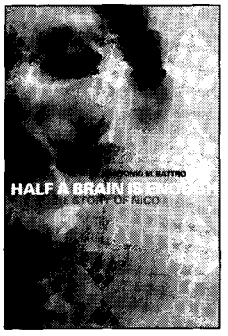

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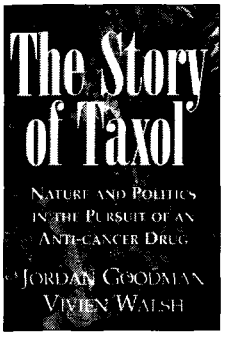

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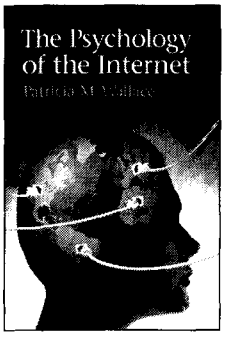

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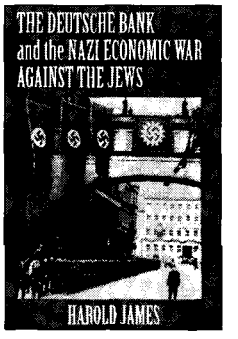

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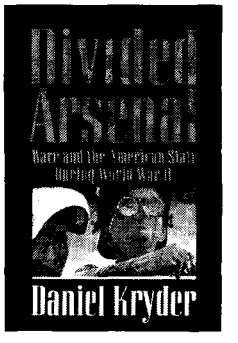

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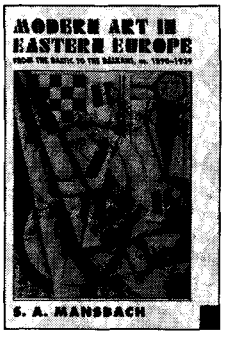

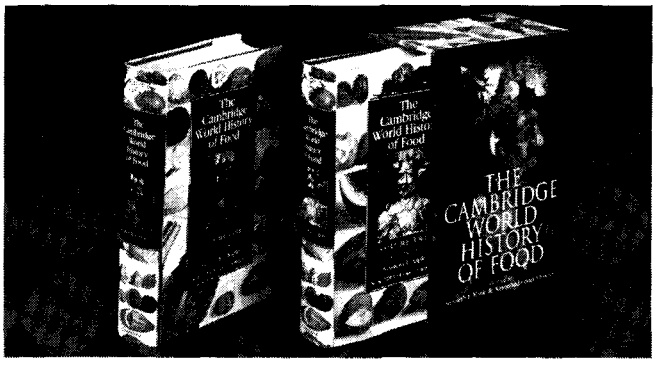

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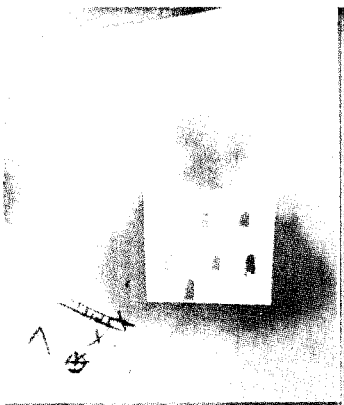

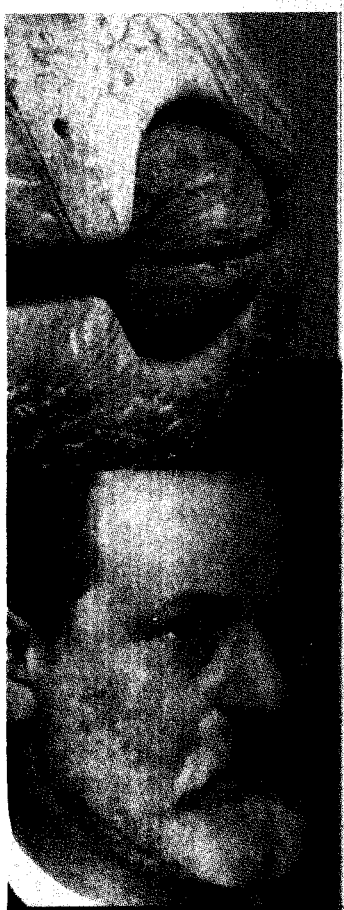

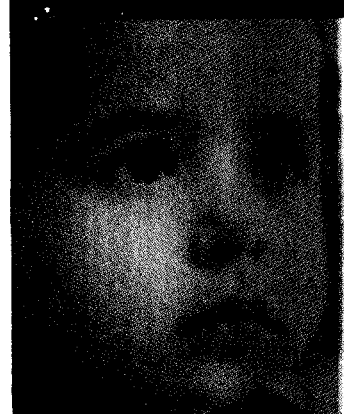

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